

31. Code of Conduct policy

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V1.0	Apr 2017	EYFS requirement	K Coupe, S Huxley-Reynard	Dropbox.com Website	Apr 2018
V2.0	Sept 2018	Update re use of mobile phones and GDPR ¹	K Coupe	Dropbox.com Website	2020
V3.0	29 Apr 2019	Update re Pre-school's mobile phone	K Coupe	Dropbox.com Website	Apr 2021
V4.0	19 Apr 2021	Reviewed with reference to "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings"	K Coupe	Dropbox.com Website	Apr 2023
V5-0	13 Oct 22	Reviewed and updated in line update guidance from the Safer Recruitment Consortium ² and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2022	K Coupe	Dropbox.com Website	Oct 2024

Statement of Intent

At North Nibley Pre-School we value the professionalism and individuality of our staff. We wish to ensure that the staff reflect the high standards of our Pre-School and recognise that we represent the school in our dealings with the children, carers, other professionals and the public. We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incidents.

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. Failure to comply with the associated North Nibley Pre-School policies may result in disciplinary action being taken. Staff are required to sign a declaration that they have read this policy and will adhere to it. This is repeated each time the policy is updated/reviewed and noted in the setting's Single Central Record. North Nibley Pre-School reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

¹ General Data Protection Regulations 2018

² "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" February 2022

The purpose of this document is to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the setting's values and expected behaviour set out in the Code of Conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.

It is expected that all staff, volunteers and students at North Nibley Pre-School should provide an example of good conduct that you wish others to follow, notably:

- be flexible, reliable and punctual;
- be open, honest and trustworthy in word and deed;
- be hard working and willing to do as directed, working independently or part of a team;
- be motivated and happy to do your job;
- be friendly and a positive role model to everyone, children, parents and other staff;
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour;
- be welcoming to everyone within the Pre-School;
- work enthusiastically and support colleagues;
- communicate with each other in a positive manner;
- maintain high standards in safety and hygiene by keeping the Pre-School safe and clean;
- show initiative;
- keep confidentiality at all times (any issues – including personal, concerning children, their parents or carers, staff and students should not be discussed outside the Pre-School);
- always act and be seen to act in the best interest of the children at all times;
- use and encourage children to say please and thank you and employ general good manners;
- ensure inclusive practise is provided at all times;
- give equal opportunities to everyone within the Pre-School regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, culture or background. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and will not tolerate any illegal discrimination or harassment based on race, colour, religion, sex, national origin or any other class;
- read and follow all North Nibley Pre-School policies and procedures and implement them at all times;
- ensure that your behaviour at work or outside does not cause embarrassment to the Pre-School or reflect negatively on the Pre-School in a way that would bring its reputation into disrepute or cause a loss of public confidence. This includes through the use of social networking sites;
- understand that babysitting services out of Pre-School hours is at your own risk and the Pre-School is not liable for any issues that occur during that time;
- keep all personal belongings in the designated place, and ensure mobile phones are switched off.

Standards of behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work. There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns regarding behaviour or conduct (including low-level concerns³) that falls short of the principles outlined in this document. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see KCSiE), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 set out grounds for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 where the person meets certain criteria set out in the Regulations. As such, North Nibley Pre-school requires staff, students and regular volunteers to complete an 'Annual Criminal Declaration' and the 'Staff Suitability Declaration Form' once a year. A disqualified person is prohibited from providing relevant early years childcare as defined in the Childcare Act 2006 or being directly concerned in the management of such childcare. North Nibley Pre-school are also prohibited from employing a disqualified person in respect of relevant early years childcare. This means that staff should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model;
- make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a child;
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of children;
- discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of;
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such

This means that staff should:

- inform the Chair of the Committee of any cautions, convictions, or relevant orders accrued during their employment, and/or if they are charged with a criminal offence⁴;
- be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they have a relationship or association, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children;

In addition, staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity.

The Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (Regulations 2018) state that settings should make clear their expectation that staff should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the Pre-school's ability to safeguard children in their care. This applies to all staff employed by North Nibley Pre-school.

Staff Dress Code

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, staff and volunteers should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

³ See end of document for explanation of "What is a low-level concern?"

⁴ Annual Criminal Declaration

To ensure that all staff are appropriately attired for the workplace to a high standard of dress and grooming commensurate with their position at all times.

We would ask the staff to adhere to the following guidelines:

- maintain a neat appearance;
- Pre-School staff to wear North Nibley Pre-School uniform – not applicable to any admin staff or students;
- skirts and shorts must be knee length or longer;
- leggings and low rise jeans should be covered by a top of suitable length;
- clothing must not be low cut, strappy or expose bras/underwear or midriff or back;
- jeans may be worn but must not be ripped or tatty;
- footwear should be practical for safe movement around the setting;
- protective clothing required for health and safety purposes shall be supplied by the Pre-School and worn when required;
- keep finger nails clean and fairly short and jewellery and make up to a minimum;
- long hair should be tied back.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in staff being asked to return home to change into more suitable attire.

Gifts, Rewards, favouritism and exclusion

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift from a child and/or their parents/carers that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children/parents/carers wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, eg at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this considered acceptable by the Setting. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to children or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a child should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with this policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

Staff should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when children are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

Staff taking Medication/Other Substances

- Inform the Pre-School Playleader and/or Chairperson of any medical conditions or medication that may affect their daily work.
- Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substances that may affect their ability to care for children during working hours.
- Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored and out of reach of children at all times.

Medical/dental appointments

- Due to the nature of the business, staff are requested, if possible, to attend doctor, dentist or hospital visits outside of Pre-School hours.
- Staff are required to find cover for their sessions if they are going to be absent as a result of an appointment.

Staff Absence

- Staff should personally inform the Pre-School Playleader or Deputy Playleader of any reason for absence.
- Staff are required to complete the Pre-School's staff sickness and absence reporting form upon their return to work. If they have been absent for 7 calendar days or more, then a GP certificate is required too. Both documents must be given to the Playleader.
- Staff should telephone the Pre-School Playleader as soon as possible to inform of an unplanned absence so that cover can be found before the Pre-School session starts.
- SMS text or email is not an appropriate form of communication - always telephone the Pre-School Playleader.
- If staff are unable to contact the Pre-School Playleader they should telephone either the Deputy Playleader or the Chairperson to confirm their absence.
- staff suffering from sickness and/or diarrhoea should follow government guidelines and remain absent from work for at least 48 hours after the last bout of sickness and/or diarrhoea.

Social contact outside of the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of children, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with children or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute (eg. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda). If a parent/carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent/carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with Playleader and/or Chair and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Staff Awareness to Health & Safety

- All staff are required to read the Health & Safety Policy and Risk Assessment Policy as part of their induction process and adhere to the guidelines.

Mobile Phones

- The use of personal mobile phones at the setting by staff, parents and carers' is **forbidden** to ensure the safety of the children.
- The only mobile phone allowed to be used is the Pre-school's mobile phone. This phone is used when the staff take the children out for a walk locally. At all other times the mobile phone is kept switched off and locked away, being checked once a week for messages.
- Staff should ensure that all mobile phones are switched off and kept in their bag. Staff are reminded that they can give out the Pre-school's landline number if they need to

receive an urgent personal phone call as this is the only contact number to be used during session time.

ICT and Social Networking Sites

- Staff are required to adhere to their professional responsibilities when using information systems and social network sites.
- Members of staff should read the Pre-School's E-Safety, Safeguarding Children and ICT and social networking policies for further information and clarification.
- Staff should be clear about the purpose of any activity, which involves photography or video of children.
- Staff must not take, display or distribute images of children, unless they have consent to do so.

Holidays

- Due to the nature of the business, staff are requested not to take holiday during term times.
- If staff need to take unavoidable leave during term time, permission should be sought from the Chairperson **in advance**;
- Staff are responsible for finding cover for their sessions.
- A maximum of one member of staff may be absent for at any given time period during term-time.

Whistleblowing and incident reports

- Staff must report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concerns, by following the Pre-School's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Staff must take responsibility for recording and reporting any incident, which may result in being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made.

What is a "low-level" concern?

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 setting 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 setting's policy

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken

How low-level concerns are recorded and any subsequent action taken, are outlined in No 18 Employment and Staffing.

Related Documents

The following procedures and documentation in relation to Staff Conduct are:

Associated policies and procedures

- No 4 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- No 11 Health and Safety
- No 18 Employment and staffing
- No 22 Whistleblowing
- No 32 Risk Assessment

Department for Education's "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (latest version)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

Section 3: The safeguard and welfare requirements

- Suitable people 3.9-3.16
- Staff taking medication and other substances 3.17
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills 3.18-3.25

Safer Recruitment Consortium

- *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (February 2022)*

Legal Framework

- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018