

Holbrook School for Autism

Code of Conduct for Employees

**November 2017
Version 1.2**

RECORD OF POLICY AMENDMENT / HISTORY

Version/ Issue	Author	Date	Reviewed/ Approved By Headteacher	Minute No.	Reason for Change
1.1	Derbyshire LA	October 2014			
1.2	G Edmonds	November 2017			3 Yearly Review

1. [Introduction](#)

Holbrook School for Autism values and respects all members of the community. Colleagues are expected to work in co-operation and collaboration, within an ethos of mutual trust and confidence. All employees and volunteers must be committed to promoting the safety, welfare and interests of children students as paramount. Staff are expected to place the well-being, development and progress of students at the heart of their professional practice.

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all School employees. To serve the School, you should implement its policies and perform your duties, with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

2. [Aims](#)

This code of conduct aims to ensure there is consistency in what is expected of the employee and employer. In conjunction with the Department for Education's Teachers Standards and the Support Staff National Occupational standards it sets out standards for all Holbrook School for Autism staff with the intention of minimising the risk of being accused of improper conduct, particularly towards the students with whom they come into contact during the course of their work.

3. [Scope](#)

The Code applies to all employees of Holbrook School for Autism along with, governors, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work experience placements working on behalf of the School.

Note: for ease of reading, this Code of Conduct uses the term 'staff' throughout. Where this generic term is used, in practice this means all school staff, governors, volunteers and all other adults working with students.

4. [Exceptions](#)

It is not possible to provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions in the best interests and welfare of the school and the students in their charge, which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. In such instances, the employee must ensure that senior management, preferably the Headteacher, is made aware of the action taken as soon as possible and that a record is kept, so that they are seen to be acting appropriately.

5. [Adherence to the Code of Conduct](#)

The school requires that all staff, including volunteers and governors read (and if necessary seek clarification) and understand this Code of Conduct as everyone is required to comply with it. If they do not, the school may take disciplinary action against them in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Procedure (see the Disciplinary Procedures). This may have serious consequences for staff, including the possibility of dismissal in the most serious cases. The school expects the work, conduct, and integrity of all staff, including volunteers and governors to be of the highest standard, since they directly affect:

- The learning and development of the students
- The success of the school
- Public confidence in the school

For most staff, this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. Should they have any doubts about the advice contained in this document they should consult with the Headteacher.

6. Related Material

This code should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Financial Regulations and Procedures Policy
- Confidential Reporting Code

7. General Standards of Behaviour

This section outlines the expected standards of behaviour that must be demonstrated.

Personal Standards

The personal standards of behaviour must be high when dealing with other staff, volunteers, governors and children and young adults. Public confidence in staff would be undermined if they;

- Take drugs or drink alcohol while at work/on duty, or drink at social events within or outside working hours to the extent that their work could be affected.
- Threaten, fight or assault anyone on the school premises, or persist in verbal or non-verbal behaviour, which would intimidate anyone. It should also be noted that, any such action outside the school premises could potentially bring the school into disrepute.
- Steal, take without authority, or deliberately damage things that belong to the school.
- Use their position within the school inappropriately to advance the interests of any other person or organisation with which they are associated, or show favour to any friends, family or personal contacts.

Dress Code

It is the school's policy to maintain an image of a professional public service organisation providing high quality services. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice. However, staff should ensure that they dress safely and appropriately for the roles they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner that could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. Staff members working directly with students should not wear dresses, skirts, low cut tops or heeled shoes as these may compromise both safety and modesty when interacting with students. Branded clothing, logos and sportswear relating to a team or club should not be worn in school. Fingernails of all staff working with students should be kept short and should not be sharp. Smart jeans are acceptable but should not have rips, be oversized or low slung. If the Headteacher considers dress to be in breach of the code of conduct staff members may be sent home without pay. All jewellery is worn at the staff members own risk. Damaged jewellery and clothing will not be replaced by the school.

Use of Social Media

School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. (See Appendix A)

Contact with Parents and the General Public

There is a general expectation of the school that staff will:

- Be polite to members of the public at all times
- Give/provide their name when speaking or writing to parents/carers and other members of the public or school community when speaking or writing on behalf of the school
- Ensure that any information provided in relation to the school is accurate

- Ensure that any information provided to third parties is in line with the Data Protection Act (1998)
- Respect confidential information provided to them in the course of their work
- Avoid doing anything which could make the public doubt the motives, integrity of a member of staff of the school or bring the school into disrepute
- Ensure that any significant concerns or complaints expressed to them by parents, carers or the general public are passed on to the senior management of the school.

Respect for Others

All staff must:

- Treat others with respect
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person
- Adhere to the Equalities Policy and treat others equally regardless of ability, gender, sexual orientation, age, race or position in school
- Treat other members of staff and colleagues of the school professionally
- Staff must not single out another for treatment where they feel threatened, humiliated or patronised. This type of behaviour could be seen as harassment or, in serious cases, bullying.

Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality, and Objectivity

- Staff are subject to national and local terms and conditions of employment, which are tailored to their particular job. All staff will be expected to comply with written or oral instructions, about the way in which they tackle their duties and conduct themselves.
- Staff, volunteers and governors should be made aware of the school's policy for accepting gifts including arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given.
- It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. There are occasions when children, young adults or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example, 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. Money should never be accepted as a gift.
- Any reward given to a pupil must be in accordance with agreed practice within the school.
- Staff, volunteers and governors should avoid putting themselves in debt to a colleague where this would be likely to or could be seen to influence their work.

Accountability

- All staff are accountable to the school for their actions. They must also respect and adhere to the management structure of the school, ensuring that management roles and decisions are not ignored or undermined. Managers have a responsibility to hold staff accountable for agreed actions and to themselves be accountable to the staff they manage.

Stewardship

All staff, volunteers and governors must:

- Use any public funds entrusted to or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner
- Not make personal use of property or facilities of the school unless authorised to do so

Personal Interests

- An employee must not in their official or personal capacity allow their personal interests to conflict with the school's requirements, bring the reputation of the school into disrepute, or use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Declaration of Interests

- All staff must comply with any requirements of Derbyshire LA to register or declare interests and to declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of their employment.

Openness

Staff must maintain appropriate confidentiality and not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it. Unless:

- They are required by law to do so and/or
- Disclosure of the information to the appropriate person is required to adequately safeguard a child or children. See Reporting Concerns, on page 8. Staff must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

Appointment of Staff

Staff must not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative, friend or partner. In this paragraph: 'Relative' means a spouse, partner, civil partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, stepdaughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse of partner of any of the preceding persons. 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who have a close personal relationship.

Duty of Trust

All staff must, at all times, act in accordance with the trust that the school is entitled to place in them. In like manner, the school is expected to act in accordance with the trust that the employee is entitled to place on the school.

Trade Union Membership

We support the system of collective bargaining and believe in the principle of solving industrial relations problems by discussion and agreement. It may be advantageous for staff to belong to a trade union that represents them on the appropriate negotiating body. All staff are strongly encouraged to be a member of an appropriate trade union.

Working with and Safeguarding Children

As an organisation, Holbrook School for Autism is governed by a number of government directives, policies and Acts (Children Act, Education Act, Protection of Children Act, etc.) that place us under a statutory duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This section covers what this means to all staff in terms of their individual responsibilities to protect and promote the welfare of children. It covers:

- Definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- An individual's responsibilities
- Understanding procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children
- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action (*See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*)

Related Materials

Information in this section summarises the guidance from the UK government, provided on the Every Child Matters website. All staff should also read the Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People document on the website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk which provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children.

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully

These aspects of safeguarding and promoting welfare all contribute to the five outcomes for improving the wellbeing of children set out in the Children Act 2004, namely:

- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from harm and neglect
- Education, training and recreation
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Social and economic well-being

An Individual's Responsibilities

Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe. All staff play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum.

All staff have three main areas of responsibility, covered in this section:

- Understanding procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children
- Providing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

The overriding principle of these policies is that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Procedures for Promoting and Safeguarding the Welfare of Children

All staff must be familiar with and follow our procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, and know who to contact to express concerns about a child's welfare (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy). They should also be aware of the latest information on the Every Child Matters website: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Safe Environment

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; and safeguard children and young people. Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, they have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm.

Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

Conduct and General Guidance

This section provides guidance on an employee's expected conduct and safer working practices.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead someone to question their motivation and/or intentions. Everyone expects high standards of behaviour from school staff. In order to adhere to the standards should:

- Always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably
- Take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare
- Continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the latest guidance
- Comply with relevant statutory provisions which support the well-being and development of students, including where these require co-operation and collaboration with a range of agencies, as well as teacher colleagues and other adults.

They must not:

- Seriously demean or undermine students, their parents, carers or colleagues, or act towards them in a manner which is discriminatory
- Misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience
- Bring the reputation and standing of the profession and the school into serious disrepute

Safe Working Practices: Appropriate Behaviour

We cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for adults in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists.

Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of children in their charge. Such judgements should always be recorded and shared with a senior manager, preferably the Headteacher, so they are seen to be acting appropriately.

The Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People document (on the website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk) provides guidance clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided.

This provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children when dealing with the following:

- Duty of care
- Handling and sharing confidential information about children and young people
- Relationships and trust
- Behaviour towards students
- Personal living space
- Gifts, rewards and favouritism
- Communication with children and young people
- Social contact
- Sexual contact
- Physical contact

- Behaviour management
 - Control and physical intervention
 - Intimate care
 - Personal care
 - First aid and administration of medication
 - One-to-one situations
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- Home visits
 - Transporting children and young people
 - Trips and outings
 - Photography and videos
 - Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Reporting Concerns: What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

All staff have a duty to report matters concerning offences of a criminal or child protection nature. (See *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*)

They have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies at an early stage. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

If a school employee has concerns about a student's welfare, or if a child discloses that they are suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, they should speak to the Designated Senior Person (DSP) with a view to passing on the information.

Individuals must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration. Individuals will need to use their own judgement, but it is preferable that suspicions are reported in accordance with this guidance in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

For example:

- Actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual, including risks to children or the public as well as other workers
- Sexual or physical abuse of children
- Neglect or emotional abuse of children

Reporting Incidents

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that their actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, they should discuss the matter with the Designated Senior Person (the DSP) in the first instance. Where it is agreed with the DSP, the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a student physically, or where a student, parent or other adult has made a complaint. The Headteacher will thereafter make a decision to contact the Local Authority for advice and any follow up action as deemed necessary.

Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting Code)

This section describes how to raise concerns.

About the Confidential Reporting Code

Whistleblowing inside the work place is the reporting by staff or ex-staff of wrongdoing such as fraud, malpractice, mismanagement, breach of health and safety law or any other illegal or unethical act either on the part of management, the Governing Body or by fellow staff.

The school's Confidential Reporting Code allows staff to express their concerns without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage. It is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise concerns within the school, rather than overlooking a problem or taking it outside of the organisation.

Raising Concerns

The Confidential Reporting Code should be used to raise serious concerns, including:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of public funds
- Fraud and corruption
- Sexual or Physical abuse of students
- Other unethical conduct

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It is important that all staff raise issues when they are just concerns rather than wait until they become more serious.

Fraudulent, Criminal or Child Protection Offences

All staff have a duty to report matters concerning fraud, offences of a criminal or child protection nature. Individuals will need to use their own judgement but it is preferable that suspicions are reported in accordance with this guidance rather than ignored.

Making a Disclosure

Staff should raise any concerns with the Headteacher and where this is inappropriate with the Chair of Governors, either orally or in writing.

They have the right to have the matter treated confidentially.

Untrue Allegations

Where an allegation is made in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the whistle blower. If, however, allegations are made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual.

Independent Advice

Any member of staff who has a public concern that affects a third party and who wants independent advice, may contact the independent charity, Public Concern at Work, (www.pcaw.co.uk). Their lawyers can give free confidential advice at any stage. They can help if anyone is worried about something that is going on at work and are unsure about what to do next, or have raised concerns but are concerned that it has not been addressed and the risk is on-going.

[Appendix A](#)

Use of Social Media

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests, e.g. social networking websites such as Facebook, Bebo and MySpace, but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, photo documents and video sharing websites such as YouTube and micro blogging services such as Twitter. This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media they use, both at work and in their personal lives as they are intended to assist those working with students to act safely and responsibly.

Use of Social Media in School

Any use of social media made in a professional capacity must not:

- Bring the school into disrepute
- Breach confidentiality
- Breach copyrights of any kind
- Bully, harass or be discriminatory in any way
- Be defamatory or derogatory

Use of Social Media Outside School

When using social media in a personal capacity staff should be aware that some opinions expressed could be considered to damage the reputation of the school. It is advisable to omit any references mentioning the school by name, or person by their name or job title. Opinions should follow the guidelines above to not bring the school into disrepute and should not breach confidentiality, breach copyrights, bully, harass or discriminate in any way.

General Considerations

When using social media staff should:

- Never share work log-in details or passwords
- Keep personal phone numbers private
- Not give personal email addresses to students or parents
- Restrict access to certain groups of people on their social media sites and pages.

Those working with young people have a duty of care and are therefore expected to adopt high standards of behaviour to retain the confidence and respect of colleagues, students and parents both within the school and outside of it. They should maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties. Staff should not make “friends” of students at the school, nor should they accept invitations to become a “friend” of any students. All staff, particularly those new to the school, should check any information they have placed on social media sites to ensure that information available about them publicly is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs which may cause embarrassment to themselves and or the school if they were to be published outside the site.

Staff should keep any communication with students transparent and on a professional basis, e.g. by using their professional email address or telephone number. Where there is any doubt about whether communication between a student/parent and a member of staff is acceptable and appropriate a member of SLT should be consulted. Personal numbers should not be given to any parent/carers or students.

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