



## **Policy for Staff Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Columbia Primary School**

### **Aims**

We understand that professionalism and good working relationships are an essential part of any environment where children and adults are expected to grow and learn.

We know that professionalism and good working relationships do not happen by accident. They are the result of conscious effort and can only develop in a climate of mutual respect and trust.

The aim of this policy is to help the school to maintain such a climate.

### **Communication and Relationships**

#### **Children**

We expect the relationship between children and staff to be friendly and formal. As such, staff do not buy gifts for individual children, communicate with children outside of school or use endearments. When talking to one another, adults and children always use one another's names.

#### **The staffroom**

Roles and relationships in our school are fluid and overlapping. Some members of staff are parents at Columbia, others are friends and relatives of Columbia families. This helps to form the network of relationships which is one of our school's strengths. It can also create difficulties because it blurs the boundaries between staff, friends and parents.

The staffroom is not, therefore, a place where adults are free to say exactly what they feel. In addition, it is important for staff who are also Columbia parents to respect the professional boundaries of their children's teachers. Parents who are members of staff communicate with teachers at the appropriate time and place and behave in the same way as other parents.

We speak positively about

- specific parents;
- specific children; and
- colleagues

or not at all.

We don't

- use the staff room to discuss anything confidential;
- use languages that exclude other people who are present.

## **Acceptable Use of Technology**

All staff read and sign an acceptable use agreement. The acceptable use agreement states, amongst other things, that staff: will not engage in any online activity which may compromise their position in the profession; will not use personal digital cameras or camera phones for taking and transferring images of pupils or staff; and will not store images at home except on a loaned laptop from school which is password protected.

Email is quick and convenient and is used more and more for everyday communication in school. Staff check their emails every day. When emailing for work we're careful to address one another as professionally as we would in public. Everyone double-checks the content before sending to make sure the email and the thread attached to it will be appropriate for everyone to read.

## **Confidentiality**

### **SLT and the office**

The admin staff and SLT receive and deal with confidential information all day long about children, families and staff. Maintaining confidentiality can be challenging where so much information is being processed.

We expect SLT and admin staff to:

- model good practice in relation to confidentiality;
- respect colleagues' wishes regarding confidentiality;
- promote a positive attitude towards colleagues at all times; and
- refrain from discussing pupils, parents or staff in the main office.

## **Parents**

Parents can expect

- to have access to their own children's records;
- information they give to teachers about their child to remain confidential except where it affects planning for that child; and
- information about families and children to be kept in secure files and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

## **Safeguarding**

### **Child Protection**

All members of staff are jointly responsible for the safeguarding and child protection of children at Columbia.

We carry out that responsibility from the moment we arrive in school, by

- always having children's well-being and security at the front of our minds, and
- knowing what to do if we're worried about a child's safety:

if you ever notice something about a child which makes you feel uneasy, such as

- an unexplained mark

- seeming more tired than usual
- withdrawn or unusual behaviour
- dirty clothes
- shorter temper than usual
- inability to focus
- inappropriately sexual behaviour
- age-inappropriate language or knowledge
- a disclosure by the child or someone else

or something else that concerns you, even if it's something you can't put your finger on, **come to Julie, Olly, Lesley, Hena or Barney as soon as possible**. Don't chat to anyone else about it, and don't worry about whether it's serious or not- the DSLs will decide that. We will listen to you and probably ask you to write it down on CPOMS. Please don't wait until the end of the day to tell. If you're alone in class with children, send a message asking to speak to one of us.

At the end of the day, or the next day, come back to us and ask what we've done about it.

### **Induction**

All new members of staff receive a separate Safeguarding induction, termly safeguarding staff development and are part of a weekly safeguarding briefing.

### **Whistleblowing**

The staff and governors aim to run all aspects of school life with integrity and in line with the highest standards of conduct. If any member of school staff, a parent, governor or other member of the school community becomes aware of some activity which makes them uneasy, Columbia has a Whistle Blowing policy. This document is designed to guide anyone with a concern safely through the steps they can take towards getting it resolved. The policy can be found on the school's website.

### **Change of Circumstances/ Inappropriate Behaviour**

We all strive to maintain the highest possible standards of conduct. Even so, we have to plan for the possibility that a member of staff may act in a way that undermines those standards. If, at any time, staff:

- have a change of circumstance which means they would no longer be eligible to work with children,
- are involved in an activity which could make them ineligible to work with children,
- conduct themselves in a way that could compromise their professional status,

they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead themselves.

If staff are unsure about what circumstances could make them ineligible or what activities could compromise their professional status, they will check with the DSL.

Staff should also report any concerns they have about another member of staff to a DSL, including low level concerns as outlined in KCSIE 2021. 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 school or college 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 allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such 'low-level' concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on a mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door without a good and valid reason; or
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:	
Position:	Date:
<p>Approved in November 2021 by the Finance and Pay Committee on behalf of the Governing Body of Columbia School.          To be reviewed November 2022 unless any statutory documentation is published which supersedes this policy.</p>	