



The Ashlands and Misterton Federation Church of England First Schools

Version	
Owner	Ashlands and Misterton Federation
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The Ashlands and Misterton Federation is built on a Christian ethos. This is reflected in its aims and objectives for every child and adult within the Federated community. **Our Christian core values are; compassion, friendship, respect, trust, forgiveness and aspiration. These are all rooted in love.** It is our vision to build a school community dedicated to providing optimum learning for each child in a happy atmosphere.

*Love of learning, love of life, love of one another
'Life in all it's fullness' John 10:10.*

Volunteer Code of Conduct and Guidelines

Introduction

We are a school community with a Christian ethos dedicated to providing 'optimum learning for each child in a happy atmosphere'. As a Church school, at interview, all volunteers agreed that they would support and teach Christian values and messages. The school does not expect staff to have a personal Christian faith but to support the Christian ethos of the school. Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff must use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and safeguarding policy.

In this regard, all the Ashlands and Misterton Federation staff have a duty to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure that they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.

The Public are also entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from school staff, governors and volunteers and to have trust and confidence in their integrity.

All adults working in the Ashlands and Misterton Federation must therefore act with the utmost good faith with regard to the business of the school and not do anything, which may adversely affect its reputation.

The following Code has been drawn up with a view to reducing the risk of staff being accused of improper or unprofessional conduct in all aspects of their work. It aims to help volunteers work safely and professionally and clarify what behaviour constitutes safe practice and what is unacceptable and/or illegal.

Status of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school and those individuals volunteering within the school.

Scope

- The Code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, roles or responsibilities and is therefore aimed at all school-based staff and volunteers.
- The Code is predominantly geared towards safe working practices for the protection of children and in this connection should be read in conjunction with Ashlands and Misterton Federation Child Protection Policy. However, the Code also encompasses other general aspects of conduct expected within the Ashlands and Misterton Federation.
- The Code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of employees, but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.
- The Local Authority will not accept liability for any actions, claims, costs or expenses arising out of a school's decision not to follow these recommended guidelines, where it is found that the school's Governing Body has been negligent or has acted in an unfair or discriminatory manner.

General obligations

Volunteers of the school should remember their responsibilities to the local community and adopt a courteous, high quality, efficient and impartial approach to all groups and individuals with whom they come into contact in the course of their work. Such courtesy and efficiency should be shown to all people with whom volunteers deal remembering that all opportunities need to be taken to enhance the reputation of the school whether locally, nationally, or internationally.

- As a general rule of thumb, volunteers at the school should act in accordance with the school's policies and the law.
- Ensure that their conduct is never influenced by personal gain.
- Ensure that their conduct could not give any reasonable person cause to question their motives.
- If there is an incident where the volunteer feels there may be a concern, they should discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action with a senior colleague, to help ensure that the safest practices are employed and the risk of actions being misinterpreted reduced.
- Records should be made of any incidents and decisions made or further actions agreed, with their justifications, in accordance with school policy.
- All volunteers should know the designated person for child protection, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

Good practice guidelines

The following Code and guidelines set out specific areas of conduct and behaviour that constitute expected and safe practice.

If staff are in any doubt about any aspect of this guidance or need to seek further clarification about a particular situation in the absence of specific guidance, they are advised to speak to a senior manager within the Ashlands and Misterton Federation.

Propriety and Behaviour

All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care.

Staff should not:

- Behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model;
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils;
- Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate other individuals or might be interpreted as such.

Confidentiality and Information disclosure

- Volunteers should not use any information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the Ashlands and Misterton Federation or for personal gain or benefit or pass this information on to others who might use it in such a way.
- Volunteers must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions, including information relating to school business and pupil data.
- Volunteers should not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child;

Equality issues

All volunteers should adhere to the *Ashlands and Misterton Federation Equal Opportunities Policy*, in addition to the requirements of the law.

- Volunteers should also ensure that in their dealings with parents and other members of the public, they ensure the provision of an efficient and impartial delivery to all individuals.

Volunteers should note that the following acts may be unlawful as well as constituting misconduct liable to disciplinary action (which could in some cases include summary dismissal): -

1. Discriminating improperly in the course of their employment against members of the public, clients, stakeholders, fellow employees, job applicants or in respect of job transfer or promotion applications, because of a protected characteristic as listed above.
2. Instructing, causing or inducing, or attempting to induce, staff, volunteers and governors to practice unlawful discrimination.
3. Verbal or physical harassment of a nature that is offensive to the victim.
4. Victimising individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who have provided information about such discrimination or harassment.

For its part, the school will investigate any allegation of discrimination or harassment and will take action as appropriate.

Dress and Appearance

- Volunteers must dress in a professional, appropriate manner.
- Outfits must not be overly revealing, including showing midriff, and we ask that tattoos are covered up, where possible.
- Clothes must not display any offensive or political slogans.
- Jeans may not be worn in any colour.
- Vest tops should not be worn without a shirt or other item of clothing over the top.
- Tailored knee length shorts may be worn.
- Studs or tight nose rings should be worn in nose piercings.

Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship

Volunteers should ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and that they do not give or receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage, which might be misinterpreted.

Use of School Time and Facilities

The School's property and facilities (eg stationery, computers, photocopiers) may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

Health & Safety

The school (and the Local Authority where the LA is the employer) share a legal obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others in the workplace. Equally, volunteers should at all times be aware of and fulfil their legal responsibility to protect their own and others health, safety and welfare at work. This legal obligation is supported by the schools health and safety policy.

Post-Employment

The duty of fidelity which each volunteer owes to the school and which requires a volunteer to act in an honest fashion and not in a manner which will harm the school. For example, even though they are no longer employed by the school, a former volunteer must not disclose confidential information which belongs to the school.

Infatuations

- In cases where a young person develops an infatuation, there is a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against volunteers.
- Volunteers should report to a senior colleague any clear/apparent indications (whether they are verbal, written or physical), that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with them and respond sensitively to such situations in order to maintain the dignity of all parties.

Social contact

- Volunteers should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a pupil such as a

home/mobile phone number, home or email address. Only in exceptional circumstances can this be with the prior approval of a senior member of staff.

It should be noted that communicating with pupils who attend the school over social media could be viewed as developing / attempting to develop an inappropriate relationship. As such specific regard should be given to the schools ICT Acceptable User & Social Media Policy. As a general rule staff and volunteers should not engage in communication with pupils of the school over Social Media unless explicitly agreed by the school and for the purpose of full-filling their professional duties. Any communication should remain professional in nature. If staff are unsure of the appropriateness of any communication they should discuss this with the Headteacher.

- Volunteers must ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.
- Do not give out personal details such as home/mobile numbers, home address or e-mail address to pupils.

Conduct outside of work

Volunteers must not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

Physical contact

It is unrealistic to suggest that teachers should never touch pupils. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, such as when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance or as an integral part of some lessons such as PE and music (see also behaviour management, section 4.15).

However, innocent actions and appropriate physical contact can often be misconstrued and it is therefore crucial that volunteers only initiate physical contact for the minimum time necessary and in ways appropriate to their own role and the needs of the child.

Volunteers should use their professional judgement at all times. Where feasible, volunteers should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Where a member of staff thinks that an incident could have been misinterpreted it should be reported to the headteacher.

In this regard, staff should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent;
- always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- look at alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret contact and consider involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in a demonstration;
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights;

- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child and record any situations, where they think they may give rise to concern;

Showers and Changing

- Children are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower.
- However, there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard young people and satisfy health and safety considerations. Any supervision must therefore be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned.
- Volunteers should avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress or any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms;
- Volunteers should announce their intention of entering a changing room and avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it;
- Volunteers should not change in the same place as or shower with children.

Behaviour management and physical intervention

- Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools and physical force should never be used as a form of punishment; to do so is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Sexual contact with children and curriculum issues

It is a criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in any form of sexual activity with a young person under 18, even with their consent (Sexual Offences Act 2003). This also includes non-contact activities such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Employees and volunteers working within a school would be deemed to be in a position of trust and must conduct themselves in accordance with the statutory requirements of the guidance "Keeping Children Safe In Education" (DfE 2016) and must not engage in a staff/pupil relationship that extends beyond the professional requirements of their role in any circumstance. Employees and volunteers at the school are required to adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.

One to one situations and overnight supervision

- When staff work regularly on an individual basis with children, they are generally more vulnerable to allegations.
- To avoid such situations arising meetings should, wherever possible, be arranged so that staff are visible and/or audible and not in secluded areas of the school.
- Staff should not arrange to meet a pupil away from the school premises without good reason, but if this is necessary, only with the expressed approval of parents and a senior member of staff.

Educational visits and after school clubs

Volunteers should always take care to have another adult present during out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff. Health and safety requirements should be strictly adhered to.

Volunteers should ensure that they display professional behaviour during activities that take place off the school site and ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Volunteers should therefore maintain a professional relationship with pupils at all times.

Photography, videos and other creative arts

Many school activities involve recording images, but the use of such images needs careful consideration and handling. In particular, children who may have been abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography and filming.

The use of any images of children for publicity purposes will also require the appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians.

Internet use

- Volunteers must not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content. Volunteers should follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment.
- Volunteers should be aware of and adhere to the school's e-safety policy and acceptable user policy.

Political Neutrality

- All employees and volunteers of the school are required to be politically neutral and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with the way in which they carry out their work or duty to implement the policies.

Contact Details

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Declaration of receipt

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working Practice and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken.

Name: *(please print)*:

Signature: Date:

Please return this slip to your Headteacher as soon as possible