Policy: Staff Code of Conduct

Created by:	SJG
Approved By:	FG
Date Reviewed:	September 2025
Next Review:	September 2026
Review Frequency:	Annually

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, or school procedures change significantly.

Mission Statement

At Abbey School our aim is to teach to inspire, motivate, and nurture the next generation of creative and critical thinkers. We work in partnership with parents and the community to achieve the highest standards. Our main goal is to encourage our children to be resilient, respectful, responsible independent learners, equipped for lifelong learning. Through stimulating, safe learning environments and excellent opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom, we encourage children's progress and achievements.

Our Core Values

RESPECT – RESPONSIBILITY – RESILIENCE

These three core values underpin the ethos of Abbey School. Our pupils are encouraged to understand these values at a personal level through friendships, family life, and our school community. As they grow, they recognise how these same values extend beyond the school gates, shaping their responsibilities as members of the wider community, the county of Devon, and the global environment.

Statutory Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies
- Risk Assessment and Risky Areas Policies
- Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy

Rationale

Abbey School fosters a culture of the highest professional standards, integrity, and mutual respect. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all school and nursery staff (employed or self-employed) and volunteers — collectively referred to as School Staff. These expectations promote a

culture of safety, professionalism, and trust, ensuring that adults act as positive role models for pupils and each other. The Code supports the principles in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People in Education (2024).

Principles of Professional Practice

1. Place the wellbeing and learning of pupils at the centre of their practice.
2. Have high expectations for all pupils, addressing underachievement and supporting progress for every child.
3. Treat pupils fairly and respectfully, valuing diversity, individuality, and voice.
4. Model honesty, tolerance, enthusiasm for learning, and care for others.
5. Work sensitively with families, recognising parents and carers as key partners in education.
6. Reflect on their own practice, seek professional growth, and work collaboratively with colleagues.

Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential or personal information about pupils and their families. This information must only be used for professional purposes and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, following the school's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. Breaches of confidentiality may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Propriety, Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance

Staff are representatives of Abbey School both in and out of the workplace. They must maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard children and uphold the school's reputation. Conduct should always demonstrate integrity, maturity, and good judgment. Behaviour outside of school that could impact professional standing must be avoided. Staff must dress in a way that is professional, modest, and suitable for their role. Jeans, leggings, T-shirts, and open-toe shoes should not be worn. Clothing must be safe, practical, and presentable.

E-Safety and Social Contact

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries online and offline. They should:
- Keep all social media profiles private and avoid using full names searchable by pupils.
- Never initiate or accept friend requests from pupils or parents on social media.
- Not post material that could damage the school's reputation or question their suitability to work with children.

Refer to the E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy for further details.

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any action by a member of staff towards a child that causes unease, does not meet the harm threshold, or is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct. Examples include being over-familiar, having favourites, using inappropriate language, or one-to-one interactions that cannot be easily observed.

Reporting procedure:
- Concerns must be reported promptly to the Headteacher.
- If unavailable, report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy.

- Concerns about the DSL should go to the Headteacher; concerns about the Headteacher should go to the DSL.
- Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they believe their behaviour could be misinterpreted.

All reports are handled with sensitivity and proportionality, supporting professional reflection and early correction.

Physical Contact

Appropriate, minimal physical contact may be necessary — for comfort, reassurance, or safety. Staff should:

- Use professional judgment at all times.
- Seek consent where possible.
- Ensure contact is brief, public, and proportionate.
- Report any incident that could be misinterpreted to the Headteacher.

Changing supervision must balance privacy and safety. Staff should always be sensitive to pupils' age and needs.

Educational Visits and School Clubs

When supervising pupils off-site or in informal settings, staff remain in a position of trust. The same high standards of conduct apply. All residentials and trips are subject to prior risk assessment and approval.

Curriculum and Sensitive Topics

When teaching sensitive content, staff should ensure materials are age-appropriate, clearly linked to learning outcomes, and presented without personal bias. Questions requiring discretion should be discussed with senior colleagues before responding.

Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones

- Personal mobile phones must be stored safely during contact time with children.
- Personal devices must not contain inappropriate content.
- No personal device should be used to contact parents or pupils.
- Staff may use personal phones in designated staff areas during breaks.
- In emergencies, staff may keep a mobile phone nearby with SLT permission.

Acceptable Use of Cameras

- Only designated school cameras or devices are to be used for photography.
- If a personal device is used, images must be uploaded immediately to the school system and deleted.
- All images must comply with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

Sharing Concerns and Whistleblowing

All staff have a duty to report concerns about the conduct of colleagues or safeguarding issues. Concerns should be raised using the school's Whistleblowing Policy, ensuring a culture of openness, trust, and accountability.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Staff have a statutory duty to safeguard children from physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect. They must be familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and procedures outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Training and Professional Development

Staff must attend all mandatory safeguarding and child protection training, participate in continuing professional development (CPD), and maintain awareness of updates to legislation and school policy.

Risk Assessment

All staff must apply daily, dynamic risk assessment within their areas of responsibility. Any identified risks must be reported promptly to the DSL, Deputy DSL, or Health and Safety Officer.

Staff Supervision

Termly supervision meetings will be conducted by the Headteacher or Foundation Lead. These sessions provide space for reflection, goal-setting, and professional wellbeing. Additional meetings may be requested as needed. Where a staff member is related to their line manager, another member of SLT will oversee supervision.

Conclusion

Abbey School is committed to maintaining a culture of professionalism, integrity, and trust. By adhering to this Code of Conduct, every member of staff helps to create a safe, respectful, and inspiring environment where pupils thrive and adults model the values that define our community.