

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY ISSUES

All employees have personal and legal responsibilities, including: treating others professionally and with dignity; acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff, including the Headteacher and Senior Management team.

This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where employees need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in the school, or representing the school, and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours through reference to the documents highlighted in the "Required Reading" throughout the Code. The documents will be available in the school's 'Keeping Children Safe and Sound' reference file. If these documents are not supplied at induction, the employee should ask the school for copies.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. Failure to comply with it and with the associated school policies ("Required Reading") may result in disciplinary action being taken, and the school and/or the Local Authority reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

3. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

3.1 Treating other people with dignity and respect

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, professionally and with dignity.

Staff are required to comply with the school's equality policies in respect of colleagues, students and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in schools. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

3.2 Appropriate relationships with children

School employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves. Staff are required to read and understand school policies on child protection and should seek clarification on any points they are not clear on.

See Appendix 3: Guidance about Conduct for Staff, Volunteers, Governors etc whose work brings them into Contact with Children and Young People.

3.3 Professional behaviour

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action and where relevant, referral to the General Teaching Council.

3.4 Criminal actions

School employees must inform the Headteacher (Governing Body if the employee is the Headteacher) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Headteacher or Governing Body will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the school.

3.5 Required reading:

- School's Child Protection policy and procedure
- School's Equality Policies and Schemes
- (Teachers only) General Teaching Council (GTC) Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers – available at www.gtce.org.uk
- Dignity at Work Policy

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 Employees should declare any financial or non-financial interests that may cause any conflict with the School or the Council's interests.

When considering whether there may be a conflict of interest an employee shall apply the test "Would a reasonable member of the public knowing all the

facts, think the employee might be influenced?" If the answer is yes, then the interest should be declared. If in doubt declare the interest.

Interests will include pecuniary interests, for example, land ownership, and involvement in contractual or employment relationships. Interests will also include indirect pecuniary interests, where known, i.e. pecuniary interests of your close relatives. A pecuniary interest is one, which has the potential for making you, your employer or your relative or friend gain or lose financially.

Non-pecuniary interests, where known, are just as important. Any potential for a good or a bad effect on employees, their family, close relations, friends, club or societies etc. and any of those they are associated with, will count.

See Appendix 1: Register of Employee Interests.

5. PROBITY OF RECORDS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Where an employee who has claimed any benefit, including housing benefit, either directly or indirectly and has failed to disclose their full earnings to the appropriate benefit agency, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the Police.

6. FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS

6.1 Financial Regulations for schools

All school employees must comply with the school's and local authority's Financial Regulations. Employees should familiarise themselves with the regulations but some of the principal employee requirements are summarised below.

6.2 Business Contacts

In this section, "*business contact*" refers to any person, body or organisation with which the school is involved on a financial or charitable basis (including contractors; developers; consultants; regional or national charities). This also includes business contacts who are potential suppliers (e.g. they are tendering for future business).

6.3 Declaration of gifts

Any gifts that are received in the course of your employment should be declared in writing to the Governing Body on the Register of Gifts and

Hospitality (Appendix 2) with the exception of those items specifically identified in sections 6.4 and 6.5 below. This document shall remain available for inspection by the Authority's Internal Audit department.

6.4 Gifts or hospitality to an employee in the course of employment

As an employee of the Council, you are personally responsible for all decisions connected with your acceptance of any gift or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in local government and schools.

You should treat with extreme caution any offer of gifts or hospitality made to you personally or to partners/members of your family. You should refuse any gift or hospitality which might be perceived by the public as influencing your decisions or actions as an employee of the school or Council. Acceptance in the context of your employment of any fee or reward, other than your proper remuneration, can constitute a criminal offence.

Gifts or hospitality of nominal value (e.g. lunch/refreshments or a token promotional gift) may be accepted but always declare them on the declaration form and remember to attach details of any gifts or hospitality accepted during conferences/events. If the value of the hospitality is substantial, .e.g dinner to discuss business, get the approval of your Headteacher/Chair of Governors first.

Tactfully refuse gifts or hospitality from any external commercial body where these might be seen by the public to compromise your integrity, e.g. complimentary tickets to sporting events, paid holidays etc. It may help to explain that this is school policy. If the gifts are sent to the school, return them if the sender can be identified. If it is not possible for you to return them, make arrangements for them to be officially appropriated to the benefit of the school or to a charity nominated by the school.

Any cash payments made in the context of your employment, e.g. a token payment following a talk you have given or a training session, must either be refused or, if intended for charity, paid via the School. It is not appropriate to make the donation yourself.

Declare all offers of gifts or hospitality, whether you accept them or refuse them.

Declarations must be made on the form at Appendix 2 and no other method of declaration is valid.

You must answer all of the questions on the form.

Hand the completed form to your Headteacher who will ensure that it is checked to see that it has been properly completed.

If you have any doubt about whether to accept a gift or hospitality, seek the advice of your Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

6.5 Gifts or hospitality to the school

Where a business contact sends a gift to the school (for example, a stationery supplier sending a gift), these should not be accepted and should be returned to the supplier. Such offers should be declared to the Governing Body and recorded on the form at Appendix 2.

If it is not possible to return the gift, the employee who usually deals with the supplier should declare the gift to the Governing Body which will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the school.

The only exceptions to this are low cost, functional items suitable for business use (as opposed to personal use), such as diaries, calendars or pens, which may be accepted.

6.6 Use of school contacts

Apart from participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups for their members, employees shall not use school business contacts for the purpose acquiring materials or services at trade / discount prices for non-school activities.

6.7 Required reading:

- Doncaster Council's Financial Procedure Rules (available via Doncaster Council's Internet)
http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/Learning_in_Doncaster/Teacher_and_School/Schools_Finance_Service/School_Financial_Regulations.asp

7. USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES & EQUIPMENT

School equipment and premises are available only for school-related activities and should not be used in relation to another job or post or for excessive or regular personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the Headteacher. Where school's offer the use of premises e.g. gym, swimming, band practice, then a clear policy should be in place for this.

This includes photocopying facilities, stationery, telephones and computers and premises. Any school equipment that is used outside school premises, for example laptops, should be signed out of school and returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the Headteacher.

8. OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Employees are permitted to take up secondary employment outside the school, as long as the activity does not constitute a conflict of interest, adversely affect their primary employment at the school or exceed the legal maximum time as defined by the Working Time Regulations.

The secondary employment must be undertaken outside the working hours of the employee's normal post and employees are required to keep the Headteacher (Governing Body if the employee is the Headteacher) informed of their employment by other organisations.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Employees must adhere to the school and Local Authority Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.

Risk assessments must be in place for all activities involving children and young people undertaken both on and off the school site.

This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and the local authority.

More detailed Health and Safety advice will be provided within your school's induction procedures.

9.1 Required reading:

- School's Health and Safety Policy

10. USE OF ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the school or Local Authority's reputation and public confidence.

All school and Local Authority buildings and premises operate a no smoking policy.

11. USE OF SCHOOL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The school has the right to monitor emails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems by employees.

Employees should be aware that the school has the right to access employees' personal email and computer files if saved on school communication systems, if required for investigation of misuse.

It is recommended that employees do not use school systems (phone, email, computers) for excessive personal use. Inappropriate usage, which includes excessive or regular personal use may result in disciplinary action for the employee and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Inappropriate use of email and internet systems also includes viewing, publication or circulation of illegal or offensive material, viewing, publication or circulation of junk mail, including chain letters, jokes or large attachments, gambling or gaming; these will be treated as disciplinary matters.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential. Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees who receive inappropriate communications are advised to inform their Headteacher or line manager immediately.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

All school employees and Governors come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to read and to observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

12.1 Managing data

Under the Data Protection Act, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

12.2 Disclosing data

Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the Local Authority to other parties, for example, parents, colleagues or social networking sites and internet blogs. There are particular exceptions to this; for example disclosure of suspected or alleged abuse of a pupil to Child Protection officers and discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the school's Whistleblowing procedure. All school communication with the media

must be directed through the Headteacher. Authorised representatives of trade unions may have communication with the media on behalf of the trade union.

There are circumstances in which staff are obliged to release pupil data, for example, to parents seeking information about pupil progress or to other colleagues in the school.

Staff should be aware that from time to time, information about employees' salaries is matched with other public sector information to prevent fraudulent claims, for example housing benefits.

12.3 Access to data

Everyone has the right to access data that is held about them, including references written by your current employer, and such requests should be made to the Headteacher who will address the request in conjunction with the Local Authority's Data Protection Officer.

12.4 Required reading:

- School's Whistleblowing Procedure

13. COPYRIGHT

Copyright legislation should be displayed next to photocopier machines and employees are required to adhere to the guidance provided about use of educational resources.

14. DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role, which may be 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 considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism and allegations.

15. POWER AND POSITIONS OF TRUST

As a result of knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, staff working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to those people in their care. It is vital for all staff to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

I declare that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for School Employees and have been made aware of the “Required Reading”.

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____

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APPENDIX ONE

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGISTER OF EMPLOYEE INTERESTS

Registration of Financial and Other Interests

Please refer to the corresponding guidance notes overleaf when completing the declaration. Items in italics have a definition in these notes.

I (full name) _____

An employee of _____ School give notice that I have set out below, under the appropriate headings, my interests which ***potentially conflict*** with the work of the School and/or Council, which I am required to declare under the Code as to the conduct which is expected of me and I have put 'none' where I have no such interest under any heading.

Give details of

1	Any employment or business carried on by you other than your current role with the school. <ul style="list-style-type: none">state company and position
2	Any Involvement in <i>companies</i> by you and/or <i>close relative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">state company and position
3	Involvement in <i>contracts</i> with the School and/or Authority by you and/or close relative <ul style="list-style-type: none">state contract and involvement

4	Governor of educational establishment (other than the school in which you work)
5	Beneficial interest in land or property
6.	Intent to bid for land or property owned by the School or Council
7.	Membership of a secret society as defined by the Local Government Management Board

I recognise that it can be a disciplinary matter to:-

1. Omit information that ought to be given in this notice;
2. Provide information that is materially false or misleading;
3. Fail to give further notices in order to
 - Bring up-to-date information in this notice
 - Declare an interest that I acquire after the date of this notice and have to declare.

I understand that I must within 28 days of becoming aware of any change to the interests specified above provide written notification of that change.

Signed

Date

Signed

Date

Headteacher or Chair of Governors

Guidance Notes for the purpose of completing the Register of Employee Interests Form

- Close Relative: A close relative is defined as a spouse, parent, sibling, son, daughter or common law partner.
- Involvement could be either paid or unpaid. Involvement in companies includes, for example, directorships and company secretary, or any other position where a person is actively involved in running of a company's affairs, where the company has, or may have, a contractual relationship with the School. This declaration is in addition to the requirements of the conditions of service concerning employment outside normal hours.
- The holding of shares or other securities in a company or other body with whom the school contracts or is considering contracting, must be declared if the holding exceeds £25,000 or more than 1/100th of the nominal value of the issued share capital, whichever is less. The size and nature of the holding need not be declared, the name of the company will suffice. This requirement does not extend to banks and building societies.
- Membership of Governing Bodies (other than your own school), including all schools maintained by the authority, all further education establishments and all grant maintained schools.
- Beneficial interest in land or property excludes the employee's own dwelling and only relates to land and property within the Local Authority's boundary.
- The intention to bid for the purchase of land or property owned by the School or Council should be declared as soon as is practicable. Section 117 of the Local Government Act also requires that the interest be declared to the departmental Chief Officer who shall also inform the Chief Officer.
- Secret societies are defined by the Local Government Management Board. It is recommended that this definition is used to determine whether a declaration should be made. The LGMB use the following definition:

Any lodge chapter society trust or regular gathering or meeting which:

a) is not open to members of the public who are not members of the lodge chapter society or trust

b) includes in the grant of membership an obligation on the part of the member a requirement to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society, gathering or meeting; and

c) includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy about the rules, membership or conduct of

the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting.

A lodge, chapter, society trust gathering or meeting as defined above, should not be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of generally recognised religion.

APPENDIX TWO

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO EMPLOYEES

Name of Employee _____

Who was/would have been the recipient of the gift/hospitality (*if not yourself*) and what is their relationship to you? _____

Who made the offer [*individual/company/organisation etc*] and when? _____

Give details of the gift/hospitality _____

What was its estimated value? _____

What was the purpose of the offer? _____

Did you accept or refuse the offer? _____

Is the individual/company/organisation dealing with you or the School in relation to any matters? If so, please give details _____

Are they providing goods/services to the School or hoping to do so in future?

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, I have complied with that guidance

Signature of Employee _____

Date of declaration _____

APPENDIX THREE

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GUIDANCE FOR SAFER WORKING PRACTICE FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, GOVERNORS etc WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance is intended to assist schools to minimise the risk of staff and volunteers being accused of improper conduct towards the children and young people with whom they come into contact during their work. The subject should be covered in schools' induction arrangements for all staff and volunteers.

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff relate to pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. Staff must exercise professional judgement in their dealings with pupils. For the vast majority of staff this code of conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If staff have any doubts about the advice contained in this document they should consult their head teacher.

Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance is designed to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

2. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse may be physical, sexual or psychological. While child abusers may be relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of these may gain access to children in schools as teachers or support staff or through their voluntary involvement in school activities. Pupils and staff should not feel inhibited from reporting abuse by staff or volunteers, or any incident where a pupil has grounds to believe that a member of staff or volunteer has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour. Headteachers and staff will continue to do all they can to ensure that the environment within schools encourages pupils and staff to make truthful reports of any inappropriate behaviour.

2.1 Child Protection Procedures

The action to be taken by staff when they suspect a pupil is being abused by a person outside or inside the school, and the steps that must by law be taken if an

allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff by a pupil, are set out in the school's child protection procedure and all staff should be familiar with this.

2.2 Other procedures and guidance

Staff should also be familiar with the school's policies about physical contact with pupils, the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, and the procedures that should be followed if a pupil needs first aid or medical attention.

3 GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

3.1 Private meetings with pupils

- (a) Staff and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one to one meeting is necessary, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- (b) Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Headteacher.

3.2 Physical contact with pupils

- (a) Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.
- (b) Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to touch as a means of communication. Permission should be sought from a child before physical contact is made.
- (c) Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful. Any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless as outlined in Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, is also unlawful. It is particularly important that staff understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the school.

3.3 Where physical contact may be acceptable

- (a) There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present as normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance he/she should seek the advice of the head teacher.
- (b) Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include: showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment; demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE, and contact activities at a youth club. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.
- (c) There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain or remove a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil he/she should make a written report of the incident in the form prescribed by the school's policy on restraint.

3.4 Caring for pupils with particular problems

- (a) Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.
- (b) Wherever possible staff who have to help children with intimate care routines should be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

3.5 Relationships and attitudes

- (a) All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and pupils will be regarded as a grave

breach of trust, and any sexual activity between a member of staff and a pupil under 18 years of age may be a criminal offence.

- (b) All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff of either sex are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- (c) Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her or his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- (d) From time to time staff may encounter pupils who display attention seeking behaviour, or profess to be attracted to them. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the member of staff should also ensure that the head teacher or a senior colleague is made aware of the situation.
- (e) Staff should never give their personal details such as home or personal mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address to pupils.

3.6 Where conversation of a sensitive nature may be appropriate

- (a) Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.
- (b) Other staff in school may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. Pupils may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular pupil.

3.7 Inappropriate comments and discussions with pupils

- (a) As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore staff must not make unnecessary comments to

and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

- (b) Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is also unacceptable.
- (c) The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language of sexual behaviour must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme.

3.8 Extra-curricular activities

- (a) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra-curricular activities, or a residential setting such as a ski trip, outdoor education camp or extended visit away from home. Typically a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation. Although a more informal approach is usual in such circumstances, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school or within normal school hours.
- (b) Staff should take care in receiving or giving gifts to pupils which could be misunderstood (please refer to the Gifts and Hospitality guidance within the Code of Conduct). Gifts to individual pupils from staff will be exceptional and should be assessed against the school's policy or by a senior member of staff. Inappropriate gifts from pupils should be reported to the Headteacher.

3.9 On-line communication and social forums

- (a) While it is recognised that the use of e-mail as an agreed medium for the submission of work, advice over aspects of subjects being covered or other professional matters can be beneficial, it is essential that this is done safely and in a way that complies with school policy on e-safety and acceptable use.
- (b) Staff should keep passwords secure and ensure that no other person can gain access to their e-mail account and maliciously send messages, which appear to have been written by them.
- (c) Staff should only ever communicate with pupils using an e-mail address provided as part of the official school or LA internet service,

even if they are sending messages from home. These services can be monitored and provide a measure of protection for both parties.

- (d) The increased availability of internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging and social networking sites also pose risks for children and staff. While they are popular among young people and offer many positive experiences, there is widespread concern about their potential abuse. The school's policy is that members of staff should not use internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook or Bebo, to communicate with pupils. It is advised that any member of staff with a social networking site should ensure that it is appropriately secured and satisfy themselves that pupils and parents of the school can not access this.
- (e) All use of the internet, e-mail or any other digital or electronic equipment within school must be in line with the relevant school policies on Acceptable Use and e-Safety.

3.10 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

- (a) The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.
- (b) It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the adult has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with the senior manager and/or parent or carer and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.
- (c) Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.
- (d) Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. (See Gifts and Hospitality in the Code of Conduct).
- (e) There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. on special occasions 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.

4 Sharing Concerns and Reporting incidents

4.1 Sharing Concerns

It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and Governor within the school to report any concerns they may have that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Any concerns should be reported immediately to your designated member of staff, Headteacher or local social care office.

4.2 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing is a mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. If a member of staff does not feel able to report concerns to a senior member of the school staff, then they can contact the Local Authority or relevant external agency e.g. the Health and safety Executive, trade unions etc, to report their concerns confidentially.

4.3 Reporting Incidents

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with the Headteacher as soon as possible. Where it is agreed with the Headteacher 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 pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult.