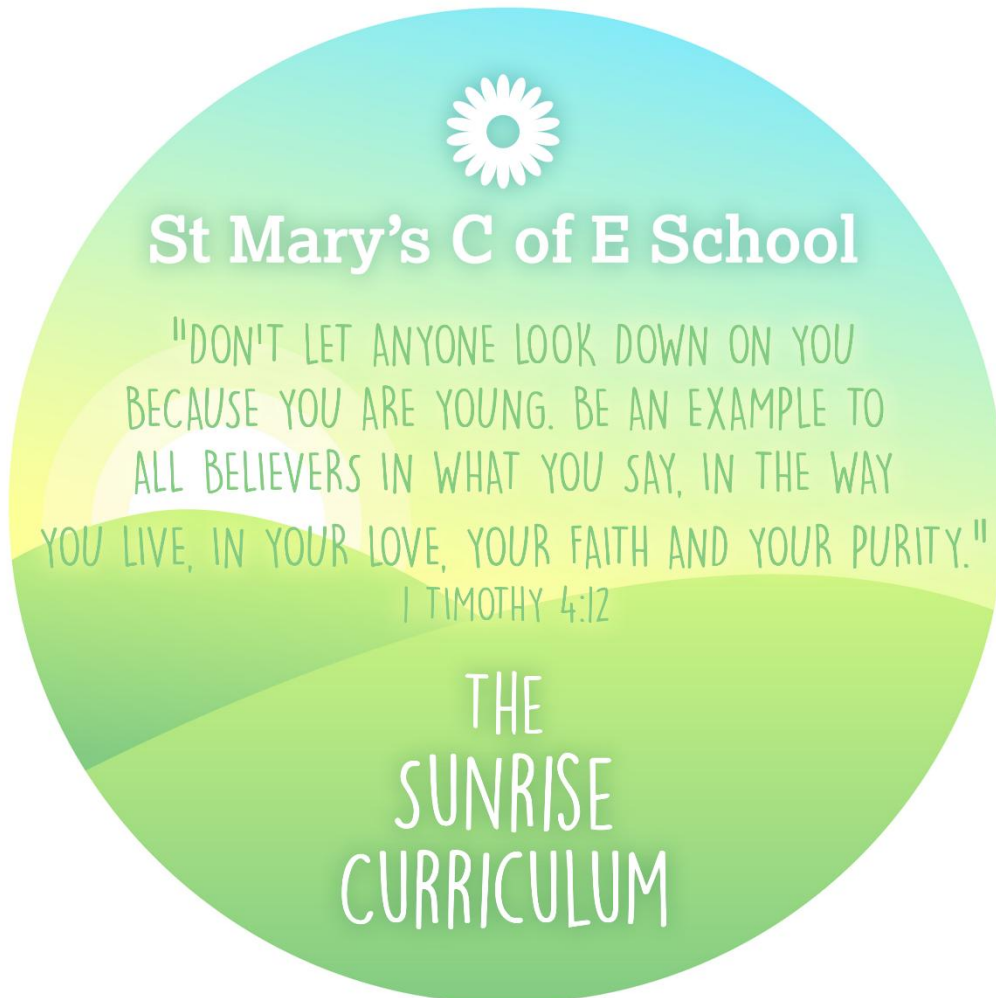


Staff code of conduct



Approved by:	Full Governing Board March 2026
Next Review Due By:	March 2027

‘My teachers expect the best I can be, but in return the best of them I see.’

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers’ Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers’ Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

As a proud Church of England school, our ethos is rooted in Christian values of love, respect, compassion and service. We believe deeply in our vision that ‘you are never too young to make a difference’, and we are committed to nurturing a community where every child is encouraged to recognize their unique gifts and potential to contribute positively to the world. We strive to provide a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment in which each child is enabled to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. All staff are expected to actively uphold and model these values in their daily interactions, demonstrating

integrity, kindness and high expectations for all. Through their conduct, staff play a vital role in fostering a culture of dignity, aspiration and responsibility, ensuring that every child feels valued, supported and inspired to grow in all areas of their lives.

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 will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should (among other things) cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the [Teachers' Standards](#)

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent duty, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the resource section of My Concern or hard copies are available from the school office. New staff will also be given copies on arrival as part of their induction process.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, but is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our school values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest". Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected. The school aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Whistleblowing Governor.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

5. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they've submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes (but isn't limited to):

- Unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay' including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or that some people might find offensive
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring
- Sexual propositions and advances
- Promising things in return for sexual favours
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing
- Sexual contact on social media

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes calling out sexual harassment that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should

report their concern to the Chair of Governors. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. The school will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

6. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a 1-to-1 basis, staff will make sure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents/carers may wish to give gifts to staff, e.g. at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

7. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents/carers via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents/carers' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Publications and Dealing with the Press

You must not:

- Publish any material which comments on the activities, policies etc. of the school without the consent of the headteacher.
- Make comments to the press or media unless specifically authorised to do so. Where requests for comments are received they should be passed on to the headteacher.

Where you wish to publish an article unconnected with the school then the article must not link you to the school.

8. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. Any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks). All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Internet Users **must not** display, access, use, extract, store, distribute, print, reveal or otherwise process any kind of image, document or other material which is sexually explicit or offensive in any other way, on any school system. This activity would be a violation of the school's policies, particularly those relating to conduct and discrimination.

You must not post any comments, photographs, images or conversations on social networking websites which may bring you or the school into disrepute. Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing any of your personal information. You should also follow any specific policy which the school may have set on the use of social networking websites.

9. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents/carers.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule a staff member's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

10. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £100 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

11. Dress code

There is a general expectation that dress will be appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the job. Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

The dress code at St Mary's Church of England School is at the headteacher's discretion but includes:

- Strictly no denim
- No 'jean-style' trousers of any colour
- No facial piercings
- Professionally appropriate hair colouring
- No low-cut or overly revealing clothing
- Tattoos should be covered
- Work appropriate shoes (no beach style flip flops or sandals)
- No clothes displaying offensive or political slogans

Staff will be issued with identity badges which must be worn when required by the school.

12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media, any conduct of this nature could lead to disciplinary action.

13. Conduct inside work

Dealing with the School's Money

You must:

- Ensure that public funds are used in a responsible and lawful manner.
- Strive to ensure value for money to the school and to avoid legal challenge to the school.
- Ensure compliance with the Financial Handbook and Financial Regulations Manual.

Criminal Charges and Convictions

The Department for Education (DfE) requires, through standard or enhanced DBS checks, that applicants for roles in schools disclose all unspent convictions. Certain serious, non-filtered offences, including child-related offences or those involving violence/dishonesty, may disqualify individuals from working with children or in regulated education roles.

You must:

Notify the school in writing if charged with any criminal offence or if convicted of any criminal offence, this includes cautions.

If charged with an offence, advise the school as your employer immediately after you are charged (i.e. next working day).

It should be noted that the term 'conviction' includes a finding of guilt, regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded. Failure to notify the school in either case will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Other Employment

- It is important that you ensure that any additional employment does not conflict with the interests of the school or affect your ability and credibility to do your job.
- Where you have more than one job, both the school and your other employer(s) are responsible for ensuring that the 48 hour week is complied with. You should therefore ensure that you inform the headteacher about any work you undertake for other employer(s). (You may opt to work more than 48 hours per week and should you wish to do so, you will need to complete the form 'Working Time Regulations Opt Out Agreement' and submit it to the headteacher).
- You must ensure that school time and equipment are not utilised in connection with any other employment.
- If in doubt, the best thing to do is to discuss the circumstances with the headteacher.

Intellectual Property and Copyrights

All intellectual property rights, (that is copyright, design rights and the right to patent inventions) relating to anything created or invented by you in the course of your duties belongs automatically to the school, unless otherwise agreed. You cannot exploit the rights to any such thing without written permission from the school.

Equipment and Materials

You must not use the equipment and premises of the school or of other places where you work during your contract of employment for unauthorised purposes.

- Only make personal telephone calls and emails when necessary and within reason.
- Only use the internet for personal use in your own time.
- Follow the internet usage policy.

Political Neutrality

The school will not concern itself with the political beliefs of individuals however you must not allow your own political beliefs to interfere with the work of the school. You may not display party political posters, including election material, in any place of work.

Equal Opportunities

The school is committed to the promotion and implementation of equal opportunities both internally and externally. It aims to ensure that everyone is treated equally and not in any way disadvantaged by factors which could prevent the implementation of fair policies and operations. The school will recognise the differences which exist and will seek to understand the needs of people within the groups which are afforded protection or assistance through this policy.

The school expects all staff to uphold its Equal Opportunity Policy and to accept the duty not to discriminate, either in employment practices or in the provision of facilities and services by reference to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Victimisation

You must treat all other employees, pupils, parents, and people with whom you come into contact with courtesy and respect and must not make any remarks or gestures relating to the protected characteristics. Any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation or complaints made on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above, will be taken seriously and will be the subject of a thorough investigation.

Fitness for Work

You must:

- Ensure that the use of alcohol out of work does not adversely affect your work performance, the health, safety or welfare of yourself or others and does not damage the school image and reputation.
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.
- Ensure that the use of any of them out of work does not adversely affect the work performance and safety of yourself or others and does not bring the school into disrepute.
- If taking medication, you must seek the advice of your doctor to ensure that such medication will not impede your ability to do the job and inform the headteacher of any situations where a risk to yourself or others may arise because of this.
- If you are the headteacher consider the options available for assisting staff who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose levels of performance has been impaired. In these circumstances a risk assessment should be undertaken.

Health and Safety

You have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and to cooperate with management under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. These responsibilities are identified in the school's Health and Safety policy. You are required to act at all times in accordance with this policy and generally to act in such a way to ensure your own safety and that of others. Any action which potentially puts at risk the health and/or safety of yourself or others will be viewed seriously and may result in disciplinary action may be taken.

Attendance

Your contract of employment contains the main terms and conditions of your employment with the school. It is expected that you are available for work during these hours and take an unpaid lunch break.

Staff with term time contracts are not permitted to take any holiday during school time. Requests for absence for other reasons should be made to the headteacher. Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible.

Smoking and vaping

You are not permitted to smoke or vape in any of the school's offices, or any other building or grounds owned or occupied by the school, at any time. Smoking or vaping whilst on the school's premises may be subject to disciplinary action.

Personal Mobiles

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time where children are present.
- Staff should ensure that mobiles are silent at all times whilst in classrooms with children and in staffrooms. They should not be left on display.
- Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones.

Disciplinary Rules

The school has a disciplinary procedure which is concerned with instances of alleged misconduct, either ordinary or gross. It is anticipated that the vast majority of breaches will be of a minor nature and that they can be resolved without recourse to a formal procedure. Some breaches will be more serious or there may be circumstances where there is repetition of a minor breach. In such circumstances the matter will be formally investigated and progressed under the formal procedure.

The school also has a separate capability procedure which provides a framework through which to cope with issues of poor performance. The underlying intention of the procedure is to give the employees who are falling below the established acceptable standards the opportunity to improve.

Following Instructions

You are expected to follow all reasonable and lawful instructions by a person with the authority to issue such instructions unless:

- There is a danger to a person's health and safety.
- A conflict of interest may exist.
- It does not comply with school policy and practice.

The headteacher and other members of the Senior Management Team must be able to justify their instructions and decisions in line with their delegations, authority, and School policy and procedures, and be open and respond promptly to constructive questions.

Contract of Employment

Your contract of employment is an agreement between the school and you which sets out your employment rights, responsibilities and duties and this includes the code of conduct.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act protects personal data which relates to living identifiable individuals and deals with the way in which personal information is collected, held, recorded and used. It works in two ways: It gives you certain rights and states that those who record and use personal information must be open about how the information is used and must follow the 8 data protection principles.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (2000) gives significant rights of access to information held by all public authorities.

Working Time Directive

The Working Time Regulations as amended, impose minimum requirements on employers, while at the same time allowing flexibility for workers and employers to make arrangements which suit them. One of the basic rights is a limit of an average of 48 hours a week which a worker can be required to work. However, there is provision for an opt out agreement to be signed where both the organisation and the worker are willing to increase or exclude the limit on working hours.

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the full governing board.

Our governing board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff Capability
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Whistle-blowing