



**Thameside Primary School**  
**Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers**

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Review date: July 2026

*Thameside Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential in a supported and protective environment.*

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<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Vicki Lucas
<b>Key Changes:</b>	Added Pg 12: Respectful Communication: Tone of Voice and Language  The rest remains fit for purpose.  <b>Jan 2026:</b> update made to Section 4 with information about low level concerns for staff (following recommendation from LA Safeguarding Audit Dec 2025)

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## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL STAFF

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The school has set out a Professional Code of Conduct for all school employees and volunteers. All staff must read and agree to uphold this code as part of their terms and conditions of their employment.

The school's code of conduct is an internal policy which outlines rules and expectations on how Thameside expects its employees and volunteers to behave and interact while at work. It sets out key values that all staff should uphold to help foster an organisational culture that prioritises values such as responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty.

This policy should be read along with School's Relationship and Behaviour Policy and the School's Staff Handbook on the school's website.

Our school reflects the values of the Reading approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing known as Therapeutic Thinking. It is a core aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. The code of conduct is designed to support the way in which all members of the school can work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure.

Thameside Primary School requires its staff to adhere to core principles, namely:

- Safeguarding pupils (duty of care and diligence)
- Honesty and integrity
- Conduct outside of work
- Customer relations
- Confidentiality
- Equality and respect
- Professional behaviour
- Accountability

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the council's Disciplinary procedures. All staff share responsibility for maintaining a respectful and supportive workplace culture.

### 2 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of employees therefore a copy will be provided to all new staff and will be made available to all staff to revisit during their employment. A copy shall therefore be made available in the School Office and the Staffroom. An online version will be available on the school's website under Policies Section.



School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- ✓ all staff who are employed by the school, including the Headteacher.
- ✓ all volunteers who help in the school
- ✓ the governing board
- ✓ employees of external contractors and third-party providers of services under a Service Level Agreement to work for the school
- ✓ peripatetic staff employed by the school as well as those staff who have full-time contracts.

Throughout this policy the use of the term 'staff' or 'employees' will encompass directly employed staff, volunteers, peripatetic staff and external third-party providers working at the school.

### 3 SCHOOL'S VALUES AND ETHOS

British Values are promoted through our whole school **Thameside Values of Belonging, Resilience, Assurance, Independence and Integrity and No Limits**. These are interwoven throughout our school ethos and continually reinforced in a variety of ways including Staff Appraisal. Thameside Primary School is also a Level 1 rights respecting School.



This means that we think about the rights of children in everything that we do, including when we think about behaviour and safety around the school (see our Behaviour and Safety Charter on the school website in Policies).

Thameside School Values can be found on the school's website.

The following statements are representative of Thameside's school values and ethos in respect of conduct in school. All staff are expected to adhere to these values.

- ✓ All staff who work in school should set example to pupils by demonstrating high standards of behaviour and conduct. Staff will therefore refrain from shouting and using inappropriate or offensive language.
- ✓ All staff must develop a therapeutic approach to behaviour. Therapeutic Thinking provides a set of principles and an approach that is designed to better understand and meet young people's



needs.

- ✓ All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- ✓ All staff must respect all visitors to the school and regard them as customers, offering them a high standard of courtesy, and politeness.
- ✓ All staff must be inclusive. Staff should welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes but is not limited to members of any sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, colour, immigration status, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.
- ✓ All staff should be considerate of each other and be mindful how decisions will affect other staff and pupils.
- ✓ All staff must be respectful. We won't all agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for disrespectful behaviour. We will all experience frustration from time to time, but we cannot allow that frustration to become personal attacks. An environment where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive or creative one.
- ✓ All staff must be mindful of body language and tone when speaking to others. Always conduct yourself professionally. Be kind to others. Don't speak ill or gossip about others. Do not shout, insult or put down others. Harassment and exclusionary behaviour aren't acceptable. Differences of opinion and disagreements are mostly unavoidable. What is important is that we resolve disagreements and differing views constructively.
- ✓ All staff should refrain from making negative comments about the school and be mindful of how they are representing the school to others.
- ✓ All staff must be willing to participate in school events in support of the school.
- ✓ All staff in using AI (Artificial Intelligent digital software) must have read and ensure the Thameside AI policy is followed in all cases. Accountability when using AI is paramount. You are accountable for the information you input.

#### What not to do

Don't put personal data in an AI tool.

Don't upload in-copyright content (for example, images, photographs, student work, journal articles licensed from publishers) where you do not have the copyright holder's permission

Don't put confidential or commercially sensitive data in an AI. Aside from breaching confidentiality simply by feeding it to the AI, it is also likely that the data can be regurgitated, that is disclosed to an indefinite number of third parties outside your control.

Don't ask an AI tool to do something malicious or illegal. Think about As AI gets better, it will appear to be 'thinking' more. However, it won't be actually thinking, it is just supporting human thinking.



How you incorporate checks into processing done by AI

Use your knowledge and common sense on the results it provides you.

Do Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of the Generative AI tool, including data retention, reuse policies, and any licensing agreements required.

Conduct an Equality Impact Assessment if there is a chance of data leading to bias or discrimination.

Consider who will be a human reviewer of any processing if required by law (Article 22 of the UK GDPR).

Consider how you will explain what the AI tool was meant to be doing.

The following, but not limited to, will not be tolerated:

- Physical violence, bullying or harassment in the workplace.
- Inappropriate behaviour with pupils (shouting, belittling, aggressive handling or punitive behaviour) which is contradictory of the school behaviour policy.
- Inappropriate swearing or offensive language.
- Discriminatory jokes and language or personal insults, especially those using racist, extreme or sexist terms.
- Microaggressions which can be slight remarks, questions, or actions that are painful because they have to do with a person's membership in a group that's discriminated against or subject to stereotypes. The everyday slights, indignities, put downs and insults that people of colour, women, LGBT populations or those who are marginalized experiences in their day-to-day interactions with people.
- Sexual harassment or unwanted behaviour of any kind including, violation of someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for others will not be tolerated.
- Irresponsible or neglectful behaviour that puts children and others at risk of harm
- Inappropriate use of social media, including rants about the employing organisation and compromising blogs and pictures
- Any behaviour inside or outside that causes the school reputational damage. This is commonly referred to as bringing the company into disrepute.
- Deliberate and serious damage to property
- Serious misuse of an organisation's property or name
- Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic or offensive material
- Serious insubordination
- Incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs
- Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence
- A serious breach of health and safety rules and
- A serious breach of confidence

#### **4 SAFEGUARDING PUPILS**

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse



- neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.

**The school's DSLs are:**

- Sophie Greenaway, Headteacher
- Ingrid Burton, Deputy Head
- Christina Calvert, Assistant head
- Charlotte Harkins, Assistant head of Inclusion
- Sophie Roseaman, Family Hub

Staff are required to be familiar with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure.

Staff must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff are expected to be diligent in their handling of situations to ensure safety of all children.

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

**Recording Low-Level Safeguarding Concerns About Staff (in line with KCSIE)**

To promote a strong culture of safeguarding and professional boundaries, the school follows the KCSIE definition of *low-level concerns*. A low-level concern is any concern about an adult working in or on behalf of the school that does not meet the threshold for harm, but may indicate that a person's conduct could be improved or may require reflection.

Low-level concerns:

- are recorded factually and proportionately
- are used to support reflective practice and safeguard professional standards
- are handled with appropriate confidentiality
- are overseen by the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors where the concern relates to the Headteacher)

The purpose of recording low-level concerns is to:

- ensure patterns of behaviour are not missed
- maintain a culture of openness, transparency and professionalism
- provide staff with opportunities for early support or clarification where needed



In line with KCSIE, records of low-level concerns are:

- kept securely and separately from personnel files, unless further action elevates the concern
- retained only for as long as is necessary and proportionate
- shared only with staff who have a professional need to know

The school is committed to ensuring that low-level concerns are managed in a way that is fair, supportive, and non-punitive, in accordance with safeguarding guidance and staff employment rights.

## **5 HONESTY AND INTEGRITY**

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

Staff are required to attend work when they are fit and well enough to do so. Staff should only take time off from work for genuine and unavoidable reasons.

Staff must be accountable for their actions and discuss matters openly and truthfully.

Staff should only claim overtime when hours have been worked and agreed in advance by their Manager or the Deputy head/Head teacher.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their private, personal, political and financial interests do not conflict with their professional duties. Staff must disclose to the school any potential conflicts of interest, for example, personal affiliation with a company that is recommended to undertake work in the school that the employee is likely to benefit from.

Theft of school property will not be tolerated. Falsifying working/overtime hours or failing to work contracted hours is also unacceptable, unless agreed by the Headteacher in compassionate or exceptional circumstances.

Staff should not smoke or drink alcohol on the school property or directly out-front the school gates during school hours and extended hours. Staff should smoke away from the school site out of sight from children. The school or the TSA may apply for an alcohol license to serve alcoholic drinks at quiz evenings or fairs. Staff are permitted to drink at these events if they are not in charge of operating any machinery or in charge of supervision of children. In any regard, staff must not consume excessive amounts of alcohol while representing the school at school events. Inappropriate or drunk behaviour will not be tolerated.



## **6 CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Staff should exercise caution when wearing school embroidered T shirts and hoodies, outside work.

Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, if it does not conflict with the interests of the school, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. Staff should notify the School Business Manager in any case prior to undertaking additional work.

Staff must not engage in activities outside of work that will impact on their fitness to attend work or hinder their ability to function professionally in the workplace, for example, unfit to work due to drink or drugs.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media networking sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

## **7 CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

Customer service values are guiding principles that define the behaviours, attitudes, and actions of staff when interacting with customers. At Thameside we pride ourselves on treating anybody in the school community as a customer including parents and professionals visiting the school.

Some of the best core values for customer service include sincerity, empathy, transparency, accountability, authenticity, communication and patience.

Accountability means taking responsibility for your actions. When you tell your customers something, they expect you to deliver on that.

Every customer deserves to be treated with respect, regardless of background or the kind of questions or concerns. Showing politeness and support will positively leave the customer feeling satisfied with the experience.

Good customer service involves meaningful conversations and seeking a resolution to a query or a problem. Staff should take concerns seriously and help to resolve these concerns.

Empathy means putting yourself in someone else's position to understand how they feel and what they are going through. Establishing empathy also helps create customer rapport as you know how they feel. They will likely feel happier and satisfied as a result.



Good customer service is all about establishing trust with people, which will result in loyalty and positive public relations.

It is essential to show customers that our school is trustworthy and that we deliver on our promises.

Staff must remain professional and level-headed, especially when faced with difficult customers.

Staff should remain calm in difficult situations and listen intently. They should be polite, and professional in difficult situations with customers.

## **8 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil. This needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure.

It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must **never** promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Staff should be aware of conversations in areas of the school where parents may be present and could overhear, such as in the office, or by the gates.

## **9. EQUALITY AND RESPECT**

Staff must not discriminate on grounds including but not limited to race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability or age.

Staff must seek to eliminate discrimination by others and promote equality of opportunity throughout their professional activities.

Staff should report any of racist or homophobic incidents relating to staff or children to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

## **10. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR**

Staff are always expected to conduct themselves in such a manner that does not prejudice their professional status or the reputation of the school.



Each employee has a responsibility to uphold our core values and reputation as an excellent educational establishment, both inside and outside of your normal working hours.

All staff have a contract and job description for the work for which they are employed, and are provided with the Staff Handbook which provides all staff with general information about some of the work rules, work environment, and policies under which the School operates. It also ensures that staff do not conduct themselves in away that is detrimental to the School or brings the School into disrepute.

As a minimum, we ask staff to have due regard to the following:

- Demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage our pupils to do the same; children respond very well to the positive modelling by teachers of behaviours to be encouraged.
- Adhere to the school's prohibition on smoking including e-cigarettes/vapes on its premises and where alcohol is available to staff at school community events, staff should not drink excessive amounts to ensure they remain fit to perform their duties.
- Avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times whilst in the presence of pupils and colleagues. Staff must avoid shouting, making use of sarcasm and never intend to humiliate another person.
- Follow reasonable management instructions.
- Avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abuse or unprofessional conduct. Be very careful in making physical contact with a child, either for instruction or for pupil management. Please read the school Touch Policy on the school's website. On occasion, physical contact will be required for control, for reasons of H&S or pupil direction. Such force as used should be reasonable in the circumstances and for appropriate purpose. Only trained staff, trained in Team Teach methods should restrain a child.
- If a member of staff is involved in a pupil management incident requiring physical restraint of a child, all staff are required to make sure that the nature of the physical restraint used is written down reported to an SLT and reported on CPOMs. Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing, where possible using the Incident and Accident forms (available from the Headteacher) and reported immediately to the Headteacher as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the deputy DSL who will decide what to do next. Irrespective of the setting, parents will be informed of any physical restraint used on their child the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have



unnecessary physical contact with pupils and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by pupils or onlookers. A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection. Physical contact should never be secretive, or of the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the DSL informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the pupil's file.

- Not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents/carers or colleagues.
- Staff should take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of always ensuring their safety and welfare. We have specific support guidelines that staff are required to provide for overnight supervision, for example residential trips.
- If staff suspect that a child has possession of 'prohibited items' on them, such as a knife or fireworks, they should accompany the child and refer the matter to the Headteacher or deputy. The Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items": knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarettes/e-cigarettes/vapes, fireworks, pornographic images, or any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. Further DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force can be found online at [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Staff are not required to pay home visits to pupils' homes for any purpose, or to staff homes as part of your professional duties, and any such visits planned must only be carried out with the explicit permission of the Headteacher. School visits of this kind will usually involve at least two staff, one of whom is appropriately trained as a DSL. Such visits are usually for reasons of welfare and support.
- Under no circumstances are staff, visitors or volunteers to enter/establish an inappropriate relationship with a student within the school, irrespective of age. Teaching, Administrative and Support staff are in a position of trust with all our children, whatever their age, and breaking that trust is forbidden by law. Conversations with children need to use appropriate language and be contained within appropriate boundaries. If a child becomes unreasonably attentive towards a member of staff, they must notify the Headteacher immediately and seek appropriate support.
- We have very strict limitations around the use of staff cars, and where such use is authorised, the employee should have business insurance cover for the carriage of pupils. It is inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. If there are exceptional circumstances that make unaccompanied transportation of pupils unavoidable, the journey should be made known to the Headteacher.
- Staff are prohibited to use social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for inappropriate contact/direct messaging with children, and liking their pages etc. In short, professional staff



should not use any form of social media for private contact with children. Staff should keep their own social media identity as locked down as possible, so that children and parents at school cannot find out inappropriate information about them or their family.

- To raise awareness of issues around social media, all new members of staff attend induction training in staying safe on-line via E-Safety Training.
- Have due regard for all elements of our Safeguarding policy, including:
  - Child Sexual/Criminal Exploitation, Female Genital mutilation and Child on Child Abuse where staff have a statutory duty to report where pupils are risk as well as when they suspect it may have occurred.
- Have due regard for all elements of our Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy:
  - 'Prevent'; Teaching staff have a duty to uphold the teaching of fundamental British Values, and support PSHE documentation exists to support staff in this duty.

If any member of staff suspects that colleagues or children seem at risk, they must raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors if this relates to the headteacher. We believe it is essential to support whistleblowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed. Please refer to the school Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

Whilst setting out these expected standards, please be advised that we cannot (and do not wish to) be entirely prescriptive about expected behaviour. However, we believe that the adherence to the above general principles will ensure that our work environment remains both professional and inclusive.

- Respectful Communication: Tone of Voice and Language

All staff are expected to communicate in a manner that is respectful, inclusive, and professional at all times. This includes both verbal and written communication, whether with colleagues, students, parents, or external stakeholders.

#### **Tone of Voice**

Use a calm, courteous, and constructive tone, even in challenging situations.

Avoid sarcasm, condescension, or aggressive speech that may be perceived as intimidating or dismissive. Be mindful of non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, which can significantly impact how messages are received.

#### **Language and Word Choice**

Refrain from using language that could be considered offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate. This includes, but is not limited to:

Racial, ethnic, or cultural slurs



Sexist, homophobic, or transphobic remarks  
Derogatory terms related to disability, religion, or personal appearance  
Profanity or vulgar expressions  
Avoid making jokes or comments that could be misinterpreted or cause discomfort to others.

**Inclusive and Positive Communication**

Strive to use inclusive language that respects all individuals and promotes a positive working environment.

When providing feedback or addressing concerns, focus on the issue rather than the individual, and aim to be solution-oriented.

**11. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The school has the right to discipline any member of staff who:

- a. in the opinion of the school, following an investigation, contravenes any of the provisions of the Code of Conduct or;
- b. is convicted by a criminal court for an offence which in the opinion of the school results in a breach of gross professional misconduct or incompetence or of such conduct as to render him or her unfit to continue in their role/employment.

In any case, the school will follow the School’s Disciplinary Procedure.

*V Lucas, SBM July 25*

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**Code of Professional Conduct Declaration 25/26**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that I have read and understood the school’s values and professional conduct expectations expected of me as an employee/Volunteer of Thameside Primary School.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Please detach this from the policy and return a copy to the School Business Manager for your personnel file.