



Thameside Primary School

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Approved by Governors: July 2026

Review date: July 2027

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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Policy reviewed by:	Vicki Lucas
Key Changes:	Strengthened sections throughout and included section on reasonable force in line with April 26 changes.

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL STAFF

1 INTRODUCTION

Thameside Primary School has established this Professional Code of Conduct to set clear expectations for all employees, volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and third-party providers working within our school. All staff must read, understand and uphold this Code as part of their terms and conditions of employment.

The Code outlines the behaviours, values and professional standards required to maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive environment. It supports a culture built on responsibility, fairness, honesty and respect, and should be read alongside the **Relationship and Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Whistleblowing Procedure, Touch Policy, Prevent Policy, Staff Handbook**, and the **Thameside AI Policy**.

Our ethos is rooted in **Therapeutic Thinking**, ensuring every member of our community feels valued, respected and safe. Staff are role models and must conduct themselves in ways that uphold the reputation of the school at all times.

2 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This Code provides clear guidance on expected standards of behaviour. Copies are available in the School Office, Staffroom and on the school website.

This Code applies to:

- All employees, including the Headteacher
- All volunteers
- Governors
- Peripatetic staff
- External contractors and service providers working on site

Throughout this policy, the term *staff* includes all individuals listed above.

All staff and volunteers are issued with, or provided access to, a copy of this Code of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year, and it is also available on the school website. Staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with its contents and comply with the standards, expectations, and requirements set out within it at all times.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any incident where they believe a colleague, volunteer, contractor, or any other adult working within the school has breached, or may have breached, the standards contained within this Code of Conduct. Concerns should be reported through the



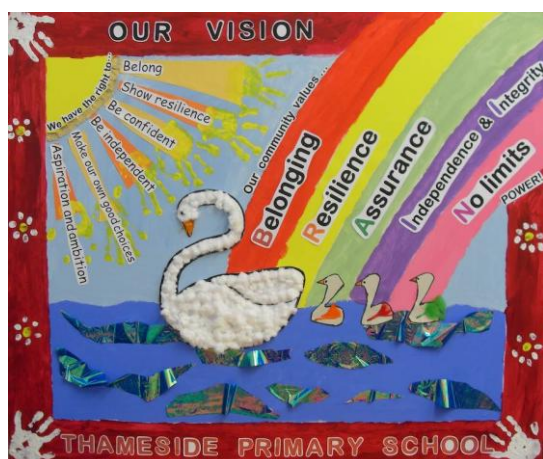
appropriate management channels. Where appropriate, the School's Whistleblowing Procedure may also be used to raise and report such concerns.

Staff must:

- Maintain the highest standards of professional behaviour
- Protect the reputation of the school
- Model positive behaviour for pupils
- Uphold safeguarding responsibilities
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity and accountability
- Treat all members of the school community with respect

3 SCHOOL'S VALUES AND ETHOS

Thameside's values—**Belonging, Resilience, Assurance, Independence, Integrity and No Limits**—underpin all conduct expectations. As a Level 1 Rights Respecting School, we embed children's rights into daily practice. These are interwoven throughout our school ethos and continually reinforced in a variety of ways including Staff Appraisal.



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.

Staff must:

- Demonstrate high standards of behaviour and refrain from shouting or using offensive language
- Adopt a therapeutic approach to behaviour
- Avoid conduct that could lead to allegations of unprofessional behaviour
- Treat all visitors as customers, offering courtesy and professionalism
- Promote inclusion and welcome people of all backgrounds and identities



- Consider how decisions affect colleagues and pupils
- Resolve disagreements constructively and avoid gossip, personal attacks or disrespect
- Represent the school positively and refrain from negative comments about the school
- Participate in school events where reasonably required

AI Use

Staff must follow the Thameside AI Policy. Accountability for inputs and outputs is essential.

Staff must not:

- Input personal data, confidential information or copyrighted material into AI tools
- Use AI for malicious or illegal purposes

Staff must:

- Apply professional judgement to AI outputs
- Understand tool terms and conditions
- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments where relevant
- Ensure human review where required by law

Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviours will not be tolerated:

- Violence, bullying or harassment
- Inappropriate behaviour with pupils (shouting, belittling, aggressive handling or punitive behaviour)
- Offensive or discriminatory 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 risks harm
- Inappropriate social media use including rants about the employing organisation and compromising blogs and pictures
- Behaviour that brings the school into disrepute
- Serious misuse or damage of property
- Accessing pornographic or offensive material
- Serious insubordination
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Serious breaches of health and safety or confidentiality

4 SAFEGUARDING PUPILS

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff must protect pupils from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

Staff must:

- Report concerns immediately to a DSL
- Be familiar with safeguarding policies
- Avoid demeaning pupils, parents or colleagues
- Ensure pupils' safety and welfare at all times
- Collaborate with colleagues and external agencies

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.

4 HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work. This includes the accurate handling of money, responsible use of school property and facilities, and adherence to all school policies and procedures. Staff must respect and take proper care of all school property entrusted to them, including laptops, iPads, keys, fobs, radios and other equipment. Any loss, damage or theft of school property must be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

Staff are required to attend work when they are fit and well enough to do so, and should only take time off for genuine and unavoidable reasons. Staff must be accountable for their actions, conduct themselves truthfully, and discuss matters openly with colleagues and managers. Overtime may only



be claimed when hours have been worked and agreed in advance by the Manager, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. Under this legislation, it is an offence to offer, promise or give a financial or other advantage to another person, or to request, agree to receive, or accept such an advantage. Any concerns that an individual may have breached the Bribery Act must be reported immediately through the school's Whistleblowing Procedure.

Gifts and Hospitality All gifts or hospitality offered to staff by suppliers, contractors or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher. Any gift or hospitality with a value exceeding £20 must be disclosed, regardless of the source. "One-off" small token gifts from pupils or parents (such as a card or small chocolates) are acceptable, provided they remain modest and do not compromise professional judgement. Personal gifts from staff to pupils are inappropriate and may be misinterpreted as favouritism.

Staff must avoid giving or receiving personal gifts to or from pupils that could create inappropriate expectations or undermine professional boundaries. Any gifts received from pupils must be small, one-off tokens and must never influence professional decision-making.

Conflicts of Interest Staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their private, personal, political or financial interests do not conflict with their professional duties. Any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed to the Headteacher. This includes, for example, personal affiliation with a company recommended to undertake work for the school where the employee may benefit, or any situation where personal interests could be perceived to influence professional judgement.

Staff must adhere to the school's strict **no-smoking policy**. Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes or vapes, is prohibited **anywhere on school grounds**, including buildings, playgrounds, car parks, and entrances. Staff must not smoke directly outside the school gates or in any location where they may be visible to pupils or parents. Staff who wish to smoke must do so well away from the school site and out of sight of the school community. This expectation applies during school hours, extended hours, wraparound care, and all school-run events.

5 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.

Staff must ensure that their personal social media accounts are appropriately privacy-protected. Staff must not post content that could compromise their professional reputation, disclose confidential information, or bring the school into disrepute. Staff must not upload pupil information, images, or data to any external platform, including AI tools, apps, or websites, without explicit authorisation and GDPR compliance.

6 CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Customer service values define the behaviours, attitudes and actions expected of staff when interacting with members of our school community. At Thameside, we treat all parents, carers, visitors, professionals and partners as customers, and we pride ourselves on providing a consistently high standard of courtesy, professionalism and support.

Excellent customer service is built on core values including sincerity, empathy, transparency, accountability, authenticity, clear communication and patience. These values guide how we listen, respond and support others.

Staff must demonstrate accountability by taking responsibility for their actions and following through on commitments. When staff provide information or agree an action, customers rightly expect this to be delivered.

Every customer deserves to be treated with respect, regardless of background or the nature of their question or concern. Politeness, active listening and a supportive approach help ensure that all interactions leave customers feeling heard and valued.

Good customer service involves meaningful, solution-focused conversations. Staff must take concerns seriously, seek to understand the issue, and work towards an appropriate resolution. Empathy is essential: placing yourself in someone else's position helps build rapport, reduces frustration and strengthens trust.

Trust is central to positive customer relations. Staff must demonstrate reliability, honesty and professionalism at all times, reinforcing that Thameside is a trustworthy school that delivers on its promises.

Staff must remain calm, level-headed and professional, especially when faced with challenging situations. This includes listening attentively, maintaining a respectful tone, and managing conversations constructively. Even when a customer is distressed or frustrated, staff must uphold high standards of courtesy and professionalism.

Staff must follow school procedures when dealing with conflict or challenging behaviour from parents or visitors. Staff must not engage in arguments or respond emotionally. If a situation becomes unsafe or unmanageable, staff must end the conversation and refer the matter to a member of SLT.

Written communication with parents must be factual, neutral, and free from personal opinion. Emails must be professional, concise, and aligned with safeguarding expectations.



7 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.

Staff must not use personal devices to record, photograph, or store information about pupils. Staff must only use school-approved systems for storing or sharing pupil information. Staff must not upload confidential information to external digital tools, including AI platforms, cloud services, or messaging apps.

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.

Staff must challenge discriminatory behaviour or language when safe to do so and report incidents promptly. Staff must model inclusive behaviour and ensure that all pupils and colleagues feel valued and respected.

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, make use of sarcasm and never intend to humiliate another person.
- Follow reasonable management instructions.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries in all interactions with pupils. Staff must avoid sharing personal problems, private life details, or sensitive information unless professionally appropriate. Staff must not communicate with pupils via personal messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, SMS, or social media.
- 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools)
- 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.

- Volunteers must be supervised appropriately and must not undertake tasks that require professional training, such as administering medication, restraining pupils, or conducting home visits. Volunteers must report concerns to the DSL or their supervising staff member.
- 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.

Staff must contribute to maintaining tidy, safe, and respectful shared spaces. Staff must use school resources responsibly, including printing, energy use, and equipment care. Staff must follow environmental responsibility expectations, including recycling and minimising waste where possible.

- 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.

Failure to adhere to digital conduct expectations, professional boundaries, confidentiality requirements, or safeguarding procedures may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct. The school will consider the seriousness, context, and impact of any breach when determining appropriate action.

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

V Lucas, SBM July 26



Code of Professional Conduct Declaration 26/27

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.