

Staff Code of Conduct



FUTURES - ESSEX
EDUCATING MINDS, SOARING HIGH

Approved by:	Lauren Collin	Date: 27.08.24
Last reviewed on:	26 th August 2025	
Next review due by:	26 th August 2026	

Contents

1. 1. Aims, scope and principles
2. 2. Legislation and guidance
3. 3. General obligations
4. 4. Safeguarding
5. 5. Staff-pupil relationships
6. 6. Communication and social media
7. 7. Acceptable use of technology
8. 8. Confidentiality
9. 9. Honesty and integrity
10. 10. Dress code
11. 11. Conduct outside of work
12. 12. Monitoring arrangements
13. 13. Links with other policies
14. 14. Additional expectations for Alternative Provision

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

We expect that all staff will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards. An overview of the Teaching Standards can be found in the appendix.

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

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 provision and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should 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 the provision
- 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 initiative, 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 on the shared One Drive, on our website and in the office. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

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 provision, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

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

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection/safeguarding while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation. A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the Provision Manager.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child/person by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, 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/vulnerable adults
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children/vulnerable adults 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 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. This is available on One Drive, and in your induction pack. 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" to report. 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.

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 Provision Manager. If the concern is about the Provision Manager or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to The Directors. 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.

For Futures-Essex Ltd's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

5. 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 one-to-one basis, staff will ensure 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 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 may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the 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.

6. Communication and social media

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 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' 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. Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy.

7. 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 the main learning areas, or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

Staff can check personal mobile phones and laptops in the designated staff area. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

8. Confidentiality

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

9. 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 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. (This can be found in the main office.)

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 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.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring Futures-Essex, 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.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Directors. Our Directors 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.

13. 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
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing

14. Additional expectations for Alternative Provision

Staff working in alternative provision should be mindful that many pupils may have experienced trauma, exclusion, or additional vulnerabilities. In this context, the following additional expectations apply:

14.1 Safer Working Practice

- Any physical contact must be proportionate, age-appropriate, and in line with pupil needs (e.g., to prevent harm, provide care, or instruction).
- All physical interventions must be recorded and reported, in line with our behaviour policy.
- Lone working should be avoided wherever possible. If unavoidable, staff should ensure visibility, inform a colleague/manager, and log the arrangement.
- Staff should not transport pupils in their own vehicles unless authorised by the Provision Manager and subject to safeguarding risk assessment.

14.2 Professional Boundaries

- Staff should build positive, trauma-informed relationships with pupils while maintaining clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Staff should avoid becoming a 'confidant' in a way that undermines professional safeguarding responsibilities.

14.3 Substance Use and Fitness to Work

- Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or substances while at work.
- Any medication that may impair performance must be reported to the Provision Manager.

14.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Staff will actively promote equality and inclusivity, respecting pupils' cultural background, gender identity, and additional needs.
- Discriminatory language or behaviour will not be tolerated.

14.5 Staff Wellbeing

- Staff are encouraged to seek support from management if experiencing stress or difficulties affecting their wellbeing.
- Futures-Essex is committed to supporting staff mental health and creating a safe, supportive workplace.

14.6 Digital Safeguarding

- Professional standards apply equally in digital environments, including online teaching or communication platforms.
- Cameras, microphones, and online interactions should always be conducted in line with safeguarding and privacy standards.

14.7 Clear Reporting Lines

- Staff must use the designated safeguarding reporting flow (DSL → Deputy DSL → Directors) for all concerns.
- A safeguarding flowchart will be provided in staff induction packs and displayed in key staff areas.