**Stockham Primary School**

Code of Conduct Policy for all staff

2016

**Private meetings with pupils**

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

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Headteacher.

**Physical contact with pupils**

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.

Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour. It is particularly important that staff understand this, both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the school.

**Where physical contact may be acceptable**

There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance he/she should seek the advice of the Headteacher.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include: showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment; demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE, and support staff working with pupils with physical disabilities. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

There may be occasions where it is necessary to restrain a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self injury. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. All staff should be aware of Section 550a of “The Education Act 1996” which allows only those staff authorized by the Headteacher to use reasonable force in very limited circumstances. These staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence to use physical force, and that there is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil he/she should make a written report of the incident in the form prescribed by the above mentioned policy. Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy. It complies with LA Guidance, ‘The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils’ 2010.

Caring for pupils with particular problems

Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

Wherever possible staff who have to help children with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances. The staff follow our Intimate Care Policy.

Relationships and attitudes

All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and pupils will be regarded as a grave breach of trust, and any sexual activity between a member of staff and a pupil under 18 years of age is a criminal offence.

All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

Where conversation of a sensitive nature may be appropriate

Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

Other staff may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. Pupils may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular pupil.

**Inappropriate comments and discussions with pupils**

As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle, therefore, staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments are also unacceptable.

**Extra curricular activities**

Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra curricular activities, or a residential setting. Typically a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation. Although a more informal approach is usual in such circumstances, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected in school.

**Gifts**

Staff should take care in receiving or giving gifts to pupils which could be misunderstood. Gifts to individual pupils from staff will be exceptional and should be assessed by a senior member of staff. Inappropriate gifts from pupils should be reported to a senior member of staff.

**Reporting incidents**

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be misconstrued, he/she should discuss the matter with the Headteacher. Where it is agreed with the Headteacher the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made when a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult.

Drawn up and reviewed: September 2016

Reviewed: September 2018

Signed: Joe Burbank Head Teacher

Signed: Jody Kerman on behalf of the Chair of Governors