



Staff Code of Conduct

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY (INCLUDING EYFS)

Policy Review Date: September 2023

Reviewed By: J Callaway & SLT

Next Review: September 2024 (or following incident, legislation or interim guidance)

Distribution

Please note that 2 copies of this policy are printed as standard and distributed to the following areas:

- 1) Staff Room
- 2) School Office

This policy is also made available on the school website.

Updates and Amendments to Policy

Date	Section Heading	Update Details	Page N°
SEPT 2020	APPENDIX 1	Safer Recruitment Consortium (May 2019) Guidance for Safer Working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings	
SEPT 2020	APPENDIX 2	Safer Recruitment Consortium (April 2020) ADDENDUM to Guidance for Safer Working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings	
SEPT 2021		Updated with due regard to KCSIE 2021	
SEPT 2022		Updated with due regard to KCSIE 2022 Highlights in Green	
SEOT 2023		Updated with due regard to KCSIE 2023 Highlights in Blue	

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Aims of this policy

Avalon expects all pupils to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment.

Staff should understand that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, sets an example.

We recognise that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This policy forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

- This document applies to all staff members who are employed by the school,
- This document does not apply to:

Employees of external contractors. These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

In accordance with this Code of Conduct, staff must pay due regard to the following documents which can be found in Appendix 1 of this Code of Conduct:

- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings February 2022

Safeguarding pupils

In accordance with **KCSIE 2023**, all staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect and promote their welfare.

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.

To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.

In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of of abuse and neglect including:

- Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Child on child abuse
 - Serious violence
 - FGM
 - Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
 - Child criminal exploitation
 - Bullying; this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or Annex A for staff members not working directly with children) of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction and during annual safeguarding training. Staff will have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g. abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against pupils.

In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff will also be aware that the following factors could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)
- Pupils requiring mental health support
- LAC and previously LAC
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Pupils struggling with mental health needs.
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.

If a staff member identifies a pupil who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff will be aware of the procedures to follow if a pupil tells them they are experiencing abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or pupil would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL. Staff will not assume a colleague will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child on child abuse in the school, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers, contractors and supply staff) actions or intent, or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the school, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC's helpline on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email address help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff members can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing. Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

Upskirting is not tolerated by the school and any incidents of upskirting must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.

If the concern is regarding the headteacher, staff will report this to the chair of the board of governors: Dr C. Kidd.

Staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which will include online safety; additionally, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually.

Staff will recognise that, when teaching pupils about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every pupil, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for pupils who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

Staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. Staff will also be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care service (CSCS) and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.

Staff will be aware that confidentiality will never be promised to a pupil – staff will understand the procedure for if a pupil discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe by the school. Staff will never give the impression that pupils are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a pupil ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Staff will be aware of the school's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post

Appearance and dress

The school expects that staff members will:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role – the school will make reasonable adjustments to uniform expectations to suit disabilities,

medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs. (Jeans are not permitted)

- Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- Cover any tattoos or body art whilst in school; small earrings are acceptable, but all other body piercings must be removed.
- Ensure personal hygiene and appearance is respectful of being employed in a school setting.

Attendance

The school expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where at all possible.
- Refer to the school's Staff Leave of Absence Policy (see Staff Handbook) if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

Professional behaviour and conduct

Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.

The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.

Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute.

Staff members will inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits too. All staff attending a trip or visits will act in accordance with this policy.

Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school resources at all times.

Conduct outside of work

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in 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. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. This is explored further in the 'Acceptable Use' section of this policy

Smoking, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke on, or directly outside the school premises whenever in sight of pupils, parents or visitors.

Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

Health and safety

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them, as appropriate.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

Declaration of interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where a group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.

The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:

- Payments for services
- Equity interests
- Property rights
- Hospitality or gifts

Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school.

Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.

Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:

- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
- Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague

Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school.

Relationships with pupils

The school expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.
- Only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, personal email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

Physical contact with pupils

The school understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.

When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.

Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account.

Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions.

Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.

Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher and appropriate procedures will be followed, including recording an incident using, as appropriate, the school's Physical Intervention Recording Form.

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff may also use reasonable force / physical intervention as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint and intervention purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the school's Physical Intervention Policy.

Changing

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing before/after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.

The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy and will only remain in the changing room for as long as is necessary.

Staff will never change in the same area as pupils.

Transporting pupils

When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.

Staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

Finance

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the school's financial regulations.
- Declare to the governing board, in writing, any gifts received, apart from:
 - Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
 - Gifts and vouchers offered by parents or pupils to school staff to express their gratitude, however any gifts in the form of money, should not be accepted by staff members.
 - Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
 - Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business, which shall be at the school's expense.

Acceptable use of technology

15.1 Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the school's Online and Digital Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement at all times.

15.2 Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse.

15.3 Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology appropriately while under their care.

15.4 Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

15.5 Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.

15.6 The school understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

15.7 Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

15.8 Staff will ensure that they report any concerns when:

- They witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed online by pupils or other staff, volunteers or contractors
- They can access unsuitable material in school

- There is a failure in filtering or software or abuse of the school's filtering and monitoring system

Premises, equipment and communication

School equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the headteacher.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the headteacher.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the School Business Manager, only with the permission of the Headteacher or Governing Board..

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the headteacher or SBM. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the headteacher.

Photography and videos

Photographs and videos will only be taken using school equipment – using personal mobile phones or personal devices for this purpose is **strictly prohibited**.

Consent for taking photographs will be obtained from parents

Pupils who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or be filmed will have their wishes respected, in line with the school's photograph permissions policy.

The headteacher will be notified of the proposed use of the imagery or video and the equipment and ensure that the use of such is included in lesson plans where this is necessary.

All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny, and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.

Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

Adults should not take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children's social care; or make audio recordings of a child's disclosure

Data protection and confidentiality

Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:

- Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
- Ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
- Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.

Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the school or its employees to other parties.

The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the headteacher in writing in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Integrity of records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Low Level Concerns

KCSIE recognises that sometimes staff can act in a way that creates "nagging doubt" without being clearly unacceptable. The chart below provides a traffic light guide to

behaviour that is appropriate (as per this document), that is possibly illegal (an allegation), and behaviour that falls in between (amber).

Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Low-Level Concern

Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a ‘nagging doubt’ – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- is not consistent with an organisation’s Code of Conduct, and/or
- relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult’s suitability to work with children.

Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation’s Code of Conduct, and the law.

The school has policies and procedures in place for dealing with concerns, including allegations, which do not meet the “harm threshold” (as defined above as an allegation). Such concerns may arise from a range of sources, including suspicion or complaint, or a disclosure from a child, a parent, a member of staff or another adult. A concern may also arise from the undertaking of vetting checks. The School will follow its procedures to identify, undertake and record any necessary action. Such procedures include, but are not limited to;

- complaints procedure
- safeguarding policy
- staff disciplinary and grievance procedures

As part of its safeguarding procedures, the school promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. The term ‘low level’ does not mean that a concern is insignificant, but defines it as not meeting the ‘harm threshold’ as cited above. Such a concern, however small, may indicate that a member of staff, supply staff or a volunteer may have acted in a way that;

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

The schools policy for how to handle Low Level Concerns that do not meet the “harm” threshold is detailed in the Safeguarding policy

The basic instruction is that you inform the Headteacher (or DSL) immediately of your concern, this can then be appropriately investigated and action can be taken. If the concern regards the headteacher it is appropriate to inform the Chair of Governors. Further information can be found in the safeguarding policy.

Contacts

Staff members will not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities.

Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document as part of their induction programme and on an annual basis in regard to any updates.

All staff should also take due regard for the guidance document (see Appendix 1)

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (February 2022)

APPENDIX 1

Guidance for safe working practice February 2022