

Lissan Primary School



Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

"Together we learn, grow and play in God's love and care."

Introduction

It is essential that every member of staff reflects the values promoted by Lissan Primary School. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the children of Lissan Primary School must be above reproach.

Guiding Principles

- This code of conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching and positive experiences that our children gain from interaction with the teachers and other staff.
- It is intended to assist staff to be aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards the children in their care.
- Staff are expected to act professionally, always seeking to provide a safe and supportive environment for our pupils.

This policy is guided by the basic principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' (Children's Act 1989)

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work in an open and transparent manner.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Principal or designated teachers over an incident which may give rise to concern.
- The professionalism of all staff should be respected.
- Every member of staff starts from a position of trust.

1. Professional Conduct

Confidentiality

- All staff must show discretion when discussing pupils/ parents/ staff and must never discuss pupils or staff with parents - Board of Governors will be made aware of any breaches of this.
- Staff will have access to information about children to undertake their everyday responsibilities.

- Any information about child/parent/family/relatives must **never** be used outside the work context.
- Confidentiality must always also be adhered to inside the school setting/environment.
- Pupils' work and/or behaviour should never be discussed in a negative manner in the staffroom.

Staff Behaviour

- All staff have a responsibility to adopt high standards of personal conduct and professionalism in order to maintain the respect and confidence of their peers, children, parents and public in general - Board of Governors will be made aware of any breaches of this.
- Staff behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise the position of the staff within the work setting.

Staff Relations

- Teamwork is key to the success of our school. It is vital that we communicate effectively and work together to provide the best possible educational experience for our pupils.
- As we have a small staff, we are all accountable for the quality of teaching and learning in our school. We each have an important role to play in the promotion of our school.
- In the interest of promoting harmonious working relationships in our school it is vital to exercise sensitivity and thoughtfulness during all communications with colleagues.
- Any issues which are impacting on staff morale or the quality of the teaching and learning in our school should be brought to the attention of the Principal or (if it concerns the Principal) the Chairman of the Board of Governors. (see Lissan Primary School Complaints Policy)

Dress and Appearance

- Staff dress and appearance are obviously matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider their manner of dress and appearance to ensure it is appropriate to their professional role and avoids criticism or allegation.
- Staff consultation has taken place and Cobalt blue staff tunics have been agreed on and ordered. These tunics are the recommended dress code for non-teaching staff. Teaching staff may choose to wear the tunics on certain days.
- Lissan PS half-zips and hoodies are available to order should staff wish to wear these for PE / school outings/ playground duty.

Communication with Parents

- We encourage good communication with parents through appropriate channels and at appropriate times of the school day.
- Communication with parents should not take place between 9:05 and 3:00pm as this disrupts teaching and learning.
- Phone calls may take place during break or lunchtime if necessary.
- Any notes/messages to be given/sent out, by a member of staff, must be approved by the Principal in advance - this includes information notes, permission slips, after school notes, text message reminders etc.
- Teachers may wish to make notes in pupil's homework diaries to maintain good communication with parents.
- Teachers must use discretion, thoughtfulness and professionalism before posting photographs, samples of work or approved notes on the Seesaw app.
- Text messages sent via the Parentmail messaging service will only be used in Emergency situations and must be approved by the Principal.

Social Contact and Social Media

- Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or strengthening a relationship.
- Staff should not give personal details such as home/mobile phone number, address or personal e-mail address to children or parents.
- Contact with children or parents via Facebook, Twitter and other social media should be avoided.
- All staff should maintain a professional position when using social media.
- Staff must never discuss school matters or pupils online through Facebook, Twitter, Messenger or any other form of social media or instant messaging service.

Mobile Phones

- Staff Mobile phones must be turned off/silent and out of sight during all professional duties and teaching time. In the event of an emergency during working hours, staff can be contacted on the School office number.
- Staff Mobile phones should not be used during meetings.
- Staff Mobile phones should only be used/ checked at break or lunchtimes.
- Camera devices should never be used for work purposes.

Computers

- Staff must use the C2K system for school business only.
- E mail and internet use during the working day should be for educational/work use only.

Outside Agencies/ Special visitors

- When dealing with outside agencies and arranging for visits/ observations etc. the Principal or Designated Teacher should be informed in advance.
- Any visits from outside agencies or parents must be brought to the attention of the Principal. An email or note will suffice if the Principal is teaching/ not available.
- A member of staff that invites any parents/ grandparents/ friends of the school to speak to any class must inform the Principal in advance.

Absences

- All staff need to ensure that any absence due to illness **MUST** be preceded by a phone call to the Principal or Senior Clerical Officer. A text will not suffice.
- The Principal reports all staff absences to the Board of Governors.
- Following an absence from work, all staff must ensure that a phone call is made to the Principal or Senior Clerical Officer in preparation for their return to work.
- Teacher's absence form - CCU67
- Non teacher's absence form - SSP/SC
- Doctor's appointments and dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.
- Hospital appointments should be requested outside of school hours where possible.
- The Principal must be given in writing a letter outlining the reason for the necessary absence - this can be emailed. This is confidential and for the eyes of the Principal and Chair only. There needs to be sufficient notice of appointments given so that cover can be organised.
- The Principal will use this same principle in informing the Chairman of the Board of Governors of her absence.

Staff Directed Time / Duty

- Teachers are to be working on school work and be on site during the following times:
 - Monday - Friday 8.40am - 9.05am
 - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday - 3.00pm to 3:45pm
 - Tuesday - 3.00pm to 4:15pm
- Teachers have a designated day for morning supervision (8.50am - 9.05am) and break supervision (10.30-10.45am).

2. Physical Contact with Children:

- As a general principle, staff and volunteers are advised not to make any unnecessary physical contact with any child

- A distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, such as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this, but should do so only in a public place and in view of other adults
- Staff and volunteers should never touch a child who has indicated clearly that he or she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect that child, another child or property from harm
- It is important that any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the child or other casual observer, should be avoided.
(Refer also to DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
(*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils* and Lissan Primary School's Safe Handling Policy)
- When a child requires any intimate care arrangements such as changing wet or soiled clothes, staff can only offer a change of clothes for the child to change themselves and/or contact the child's parents to come to school to assist. On these occasions staff are advised to be sensitive to the child's need for, and right to, privacy. However, staff should not hesitate to provide help for a distressed child unable to change themselves in an emergency situation
- Physical punishment of any kind is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Any necessary restraint is always recorded and reported to parents

PE / Swimming

- During any PE or sporting activity, physical contact must be kept to a minimum. Any contact will be in order to demonstrate techniques and keep children safe.
- When accompanying children to changing facilities, either in school, swimming pool or at other venues, staff and volunteers will be sensitive to the children's right to privacy whilst ensuring safety is maintained.
- For example, it may be necessary for an adult to enter the changing room should an emergency situation arise. In this situation the member of staff or volunteer will give a warning before entering a changing room.
- In school P1 - P3 children will change together while P4 - P7 children will change in gender groups

First Aid

- Staff who have to administer first aid to a child should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of another adult or another child.
- However, staff should not hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present
- Administering first aid is an area where physical contact cannot always be avoided and often it is essential, for example, when moving a child into the recovery position
- Staff are trained to act with discretion and should never remove any child's clothing unless treatment necessitates this
- Our First Aid Officer and/or deputy at Lissan PS will ensure that all first aid stock is kept replenished
- All staff are responsible for informing the First Aid officer when stocks are low
- All staff should be aware of the First Aid Forms - one copy is sent home and the other is sent to the Principal / Acting Principal for filing
- All staff are responsible for ensuring that they have up-to-date First Aid training.

Residential/ Outings/ School Travel arrangements

- A Risk Assessment should be carried out for each outing/ residential trip - these are available from the Principal's office.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities.
- In these situations, more informal relationships tend to be usual and staff will be in proximity to children in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.
- When carrying out supervisory duties on a residential trip, good practice would encourage staff to work with a colleague to carry out such duties. This would be particularly relevant if a child requires assistance during the night.
- Staff will meet with the Child Protection Designated Teacher and the trip leader to be given an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns they may have concerning their role, before each trip commences.
- They will also be given a clear outline regarding emergencies, specific first aid requirements and individual roles.
- An occasion such as a sports' event may require a member of staff or volunteer to transport a child in their car. In this situation staff and volunteers are advised not to transport an individual child on his or her own but to have at least one other pupil or adult in the car.
- It is also important they have adequate motor insurance which allows them to transport children.

- Staff should not hesitate in helping children with seatbelts or sitting beside children if necessary.

Follow-up

- Following any incident where a member of staff or volunteer feels that his or her actions have been, or maybe, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the designated teacher for child protection or to the deputy designated teacher.

3. Private Meetings with Pupils

- Staff should be aware of the risks which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews:
 - in a room with visual access or with door open
 - position pupil closest to the door
- Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- Transparency is vital for staff and pupils in this situation.

4. Pupils feeling ill

- Pupils who are being sent home as they are ill should use the following procedure
 - Teachers must inform the office staff so that they can make a phone call home
 - When a parent/ carer arrives at the school the child will be brought to the school office.
 - The office staff should ensure that the child's absence is added to the daily attendance record, noting the child's reason for leaving the school
 - NB a child arriving late (i.e. after 9.05am) should also be noted in the daily attendance record/ SIMS.

5. Break/ Lunch Time Supervision

- Teacher/ supervisory staff are responsible for walking their class to the lunch room, ensuring their class are seated quietly and ready to eat.
- Supervisory staff are responsible for behaviour in the lunchroom and Playground.
- If a supervisor is absent, the senior clerical officer is responsible for ensuring there is adequate cover by rearranging the break/ lunch time supervision.

6. After-school Clubs

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate supervision at both sessions of after-school clubs.
- All monies should be sent to the office for banking as soon as possible.
- Summaries of costings should be sent to the Principal for disseminating to the Board of Governors at every Board of Governor meeting.

7. End of the day procedure

- Each teacher will say the prayer in class and walk their class to the gate (2:55pm P3/4/5, 3:00pm P6/7)
- Pupils should not be using the toilet facilities on their way out to the gate at 3:00pm.
- Pupils **must** line up against the railing on the right side of the path and wait for their teacher to call their name.
- Pupils should not go out the gate until their name is called. SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT.
- Pupils who are travelling home by bus will leave their class line and walk to the corridor. Noreen will supervise the bus line as they walk to the bus and will ensure that all of the children are seated and belted safely on the bus before it departs.
- The office will ensure that if there is any doubt over who should be on the bus, that this is clarified before 3pm
- Pupils not collected at 2pm will be taken to the office by their class teacher. Office staff will ensure relevant phone calls are made and will supervise the child until a parent/carer arrives to collect them.
- Pupils not collected at 3pm will be taken to the office by their class teacher. Office staff/class teacher will ensure relevant phone calls are made and that the child is supervised until their parent/carer arrives.
- Pupils not collected at the end of an after-school club are the responsibility of the supervising member of staff who will ensure relevant phone calls are made.

8. Office Diary

- School events should be written in the office diary as soon as possible. This will allow the office staff to update the noticeboard / website for the following week.
- Non-teaching staff must inform the office staff if they are going to be absent or have been absent, so that timesheets can be adjusted accordingly.

9. Complaints Procedure

- All parental complaints should follow the school's complaints' procedure.

- Any complaint must first be brought to the attention of the Principal for it to be investigated and dealt with.
- Staff should ensure that they do not get involved in complaints' issues but instead insist that parents consult the correct procedure in the relevant policy.

10. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- All teaching materials must be viewed before their use with children.
- Teachers and others, including class visitors, should be very careful in their choice of teaching materials and resources and should avoid materials which have the potential to be misinterpreted or are of a sensitive nature.
- If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

11. Relationships and Attitudes

- Guided by the Pastoral Care policies of the school and any current DENI or EA advice, staff and others should ensure that their relationships with children are at all times appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the children, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
- Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when dealing with the older primary boys and girls. This is important in terms of protecting children and the adults who are in contact with them.

12. Banking / Mail

- All teachers have a responsibility to collect dinner/club money and put it into the morning box and forward on to the office.
- Teachers should remind pupils about outstanding payments.
- Teachers may make a note in the child's homework diary to remind parents about outstanding payments.
- If a pupil is late for registration or forgets, the teacher can allow the pupil to go to the office with a message/payment. Staff should also avail of the internal telephone system.
- Pupils should knock on the office door and wait for office staff to respond.
- All incoming/outgoing messages/mail will be distributed to members of staff by using our internal mail box/telephone system so as to avoid disrupting teaching and learning in classrooms.

Conclusion

- It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff and volunteers interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.
- It is prudent, however, for all staff and volunteers to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with and their manner and approach to children from time to time.
- In all circumstances, professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees and volunteers this code of conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their good practice.
- If an individual has any doubts about points raised in this Code of Conduct or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult with the Principal, Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher.

From "A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children/young people" Appendix 9: Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection: DENI 1999