



**Code of Conduct for
Staff & Volunteers
Policy**

2024-2027

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Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff and volunteers are expected to observe. School staff and volunteers are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each person has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation, and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers of the school.

This Code of Conduct does not form part of any *employees'* contract of employment.

1. Setting an Example

All staff and volunteers who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore;

- 1.1. Avoid always using inappropriate or offensive language.
- 1.2. Demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- 1.3. Avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 1.4. Pay due regard to the disciplinary rules set out by the employing authority.
- 1.5. Familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

2. Safeguarding Pupils

- 2.1 All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 2.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/pupil or colleague to a member of the school's Safeguarding team (Designated Teacher (DT)/Deputy Designated Teacher (DDT) for Child Protection or the Principal/Vice Principal).
- 2.3 The school's Safeguarding Team includes Chair of Governors (**Dr McKee**), The Designated Governor for Child Protection (**Mr O'Neil**) The Principal (**Mrs Johnston**), The Vice Principal (**Mr Henry**) The school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection (**Mr Hyndman**) and the teacher responsible for Digital Safeguarding (**Mrs Matchett**)
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents and other relevant school policies e.g., e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.

- 2.5 All staff and volunteers should treat children with respect and dignity. There will, obviously, be times when pupils have to be spoken to very directly in relation to a breach of discipline or another serious issue. Having said that, members of staff must not knowingly demean or undermine pupils. Appropriate respect must also be shown to parents, carers and colleagues when difficult conversations need to take place.
- 2.6 All staff and volunteers should promote a positive relationship with all pupils. This may include some humour at times, which contributes to the family and collegiate atmosphere of the school. However, staff and volunteers should not knowingly embarrass a child by using sarcasm, making inappropriate jokes at the expense of pupils, humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.
- 2.7 All staff and volunteers must take diligent care of pupils under their supervision, with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff should also complete risk assessments, where appropriate, in accordance with school policies.
- 2.8 There may be times during the school day when a teacher or member of staff has to meet with a child on a one-to-one basis. This may occur during the delivery of some additional support, or when discussing a confidential matter. On these occasions, it is important that the meeting takes place in clear view of the outside corridor, to ensure that other adults passing by can see the member of staff with the child. There are glass panels in the doors of all offices and classrooms, with many of the rooms also having internal glass windows. It is best practice for a member of staff to inform another adult that a meeting with a child is going to take place, especially if this consultation is not part of a normal timetabled session. Many areas within the school also have CCTV cameras and the footage is recorded and stored for several weeks at a time. *(See the CCTV System Policy)*

3. Relationships with Pupils

- 3.1 All staff and volunteers must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff and volunteers should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections¹.
- 3.2 Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times. Any inappropriate relationship or behaviour with a pupil is clearly not permitted. Appropriate disciplinary action will be applied, should there be any breaking of this professional trust.

¹ A declaration form may be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

4. Pupil/Pupil Development

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.
- 4.2 All staff and volunteers must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies, where necessary, to support the development of pupils.

5. Honesty and Integrity

- 5.1 All staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 5.2 Gifts to employees from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the principal with the exception of "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff or volunteers to individual pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Conduct Outside of Work

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the staff/volunteer's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 6.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct, are to be regarded as unacceptable and will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- 6.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. It should not contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. Staff should seek advice from the principal when considering work outside the school.
- 6.4 Staff must not come to work either smelling of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Such behaviour may lead to suspension from work and appropriate disciplinary action.

7. E-Safety and Internet Use

- 7.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the school's Safer Internet Policy, Use of Social Media (Twitter) Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy, both inside and outside of work. Staff should only access social media sites in their own time, and **NEVER** post pictures of pupils, on their personal Social Media accounts.

- 7.2 Staff and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff and volunteers should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 7.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media, or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could potentially encounter past pupils, school parents or other members of staff. Staff should not comment on any posts made by others relating to the school or share / discuss school matters online. If staff become aware of any online comments regarding the school, these should be reported to the principal immediately.
- 7.4 Contact with pupils must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate directly with pupils. Staff should not accept social media 'friend' requests from current Harmony Hill pupils under **any** circumstances.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the principal immediately.

- 7.5 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken **using school equipment**, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be retained and destroyed in accordance with the school's Records Management Policy and Disposal Schedules, unless they are being stored or archived for historical or posterity purposes.
- 7.6 It is not advisable to invite parents/carers to become friends on personal social networking sites. There may be a conflict of interest and security and privacy issues, however, where relationships are already established, staff should proceed with caution, being fully aware of the Use of Social Media policy and this Code of Conduct document.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Members of staff and volunteers may have access to confidential information about pupils, in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances, staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. All personal and school-related information must be kept confidential at all times, unless specific authorisation has been given by the principal.

- 8.2 Confidential information about pupils should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

- 8.4 If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior leadership.
- 8.5 Adults need to be aware that, although it is important to listen to and support pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request pupils to do the same under any circumstances.
- 8.6 Similarly, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a senior leader without delay.

9. Managing Attendance

- 9.1 This procedure promotes a consistent approach to teacher welfare across the school and clarifies the roles of the principal and school staff.
- 9.2 Personal and medical information on teachers will be maintained confidentially.
- 9.3 Individual circumstances differ, and each case must be treated sensitively.

Responsibilities

School staff should:

- Report all sickness absence in accordance with the procedure.
- Maintain contact with the principal during any period of absence.
- Comply with attendance arrangements at medical referrals.
- Follow professional advice aimed at ensuring a timely return to school.
- Maintain appropriate standards of conduct during sickness absence.
- Advise the Principal of any appropriate matter impacting on their health and wellbeing at home or school that may impact on their welfare.
- Inform the Principal where an absence is due to an accident outside school and a claim for damages from a third party is or will be involved.

Monitoring Attendance

Governors recognise that teaching & non-teaching staff members become ill and will require support in such circumstances. To achieve this the principal will:

- Monitor and record sickness absence and report on this to Governors' meetings.
- Arrange attendance meetings where a staff member's absence level or pattern presents a concern or where there has been no contact with, or from, a member of staff during an absence period.
- Seek and act on advice as to the best means to support the staff member during a time of illness.

Monitoring ensures that:

- Governors are alerted to health and well-being issues and ensure they are addressed promptly.
- Principals make decisions about temporary arrangements such as acting up, substitute cover etc.
- Governors and Principals are aware of teacher & non-teacher attendance levels.

In carrying out this monitoring role the principal will ensure the process, as a minimum, identifies the following:

- a) Absences related to stress.
- b) Absences of more than 6 casual days in a 12-month rolling period
- c) Continuous absences of 4 weeks or more.

Contact during absence.

Staff shall maintain contact with the principal during a period of sickness absence. This should usually be when a medical statement is submitted or, monthly, during long term absence. This enables the principal to manage absence. In exceptional circumstances, where difficulties in communication arise, either party may contact People Services through the Education Authority.

Where the teacher does not maintain contact, the principal should ensure that appropriate contact is re-established. Such contact should be of a friendly, supportive nature and issues related to work should not normally be discussed.

Return to work.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to report to the principal on the first day of his/her return to work and provide a brief explanation of the reason for his/her absence. This is informal in nature and provides the opportunity for the principal to welcome the teacher back and discuss any support, or further action, which may be required.

Reporting absence

Where illness prevents a staff member from attending school, he/she must:

- a) Notify the Principal by phone on the first day of absence and indicate the nature of the illness and the possible duration. If the Principal is unavailable, the Vice Principal or other designated member of staff should be informed. In

exceptional circumstances when a teacher is unable to notify the principal, a relative or friend may do so.

- b) Ensure that the principal is kept informed of the progress of the illness, in order that alternative arrangements can be put in place.
- c) Provide documentation promptly in support of any absence from work due to sickness as follows:
 - a. From day 1 to 7 calendar days: self-certification form must be submitted to the principal as soon as possible and not later than the 7th day of absence, to ensure payment of sick pay.
 - b. More than 7 days: doctor's statement must be submitted to the principal before expiry of the 2nd week of absence.
 - c. Subsequent doctor's statements must be submitted to the principal as soon as possible, following receipt, to ensure continuation of sick pay.
 - d. notify the manager in advance of the date of return to work. If the absence has been of 4 weeks or more duration, the manager should be given one week's notice of intention to return to work. This will thereby allow for the arrangement of a 'return to work' or 'absence' interview.

N.B: It should be noted that failure to comply with the above may result in the absence being regarded as unauthorised and pay being withheld and/or disciplinary action being taken.

Absence Interviews

In order to effectively assess and manage attendance, it may be necessary to meet with staff, either during the course of their absence or on their return to work. The purpose of such meetings will be for some or all of the following reasons:

- To welcome the member of staff back and to reassure him/her that the manager is concerned about his/her welfare and attendance.
- To establish the current status of the absence and to attempt to establish whether there is an underlying cause for the frequent absences such as difficulty at work, a more serious health condition or a personal or domestic problem.
- To update the member of staff on school developments.
- To explain the importance of regular and reliable attendance and to draw his/her attention to the effect of absences on the workload of colleagues/education of children.
- To advise of the availability of the Inspire workplace service.
- To encourage improved attendance, establish the level of improvement required, the monitoring period for review and to explain the consequences of maintaining an unsatisfactory level of attendance.
- To establish if a medical referral is required if this has not already been established.
- To provide feedback on a medical referral and any proposed action.

The principal will exercise discretion with regard to the nature and content of an absence interview.

Following such a meeting, a brief note will be compiled noting the substance of the meeting and any action proposed, including continued monitoring, medical referral or potential movement to formal disciplinary action if attendance does not improve. A copy of this note will be made available to the member of staff and a copy forwarded for their personnel file, together with any request for medical referral to Human Resources. An absence interview will be conducted in private and in a sympathetic and helpful manner.

Punctuality

- In accordance to agreed Directed Time Budgets (teaching staff) and Contracted Hours (non-teaching staff), school personnel should be in school by 8.45am.
- Staff should be familiar with their required daily/weekly working hours and leave school at the appropriate time.
- Should staff need to leave school within their directed/contracted time, they must make application for such an arrangement, in writing², to the principal within an appropriate time period (usually 48 hours).

10. Dress and Appearance

10.1 All staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.

10.2 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

10.3 Staff and volunteers should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

11. Disciplinary Action

Staff and volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action.

12. Compliance

All staff and volunteers must complete the form in **Appendix 5** to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

² See Appendix 3

APPENDIX 1

Self-Certification Form (SC1) exemplar



Self-Certification Form (SC1)

Please refer to the Guidance Notes (on reverse page) prior to completion

Please complete this form for all sickness absence up to 7 calendar days duration

Section A: Personal Details

Surname: _____ Title: _____ (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Forenames: _____

Home Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Place of Work: _____ Post(s) Held: _____

Date of Birth Staff No: Nat Ins No:

Section B: Absence Details

First Day of Absence: (Day) _____ (Date) _____

Date of Return to Work: (Day) _____ (Date) _____
(complete if appropriate)

Reason for Absence: _____
(State medical definition of nature of illness – 'sick' or 'unfit for work' is not permissible.)

Is absence due to accident at work? YES/NO If 'YES' was an accident report completed? YES/NO

Is absence due to accident outside of work? YES/NO If 'YES', are you claiming damages from a third party? YES/NO

Were you abroad, outside the EU or in legal custody at any time during your absence? YES/NO

Section C: Declaration

[NOTE: An employee who knowingly gives false information on this statement will be liable to disciplinary proceedings including possible dismissal.] I certify that the details I have given above are correct and I understand this information will be used to decide any payment due to me under my terms and conditions of employment or Statutory Sick Pay regulations. I undertake to inform the Payroll Section and my Line Manager of any change in my circumstances. If my absence is as a result of an accident and I am successful in a claim for damages from a third party, I undertake to refund the EA from my damages received the total amount of sick pay that may have been paid by the EA during the period of my incapacity, or such part thereof as may be decided by the EA, having regard to the amount of damages received.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Section D: Line Manager to Complete

A return to work meeting took place upon the employee's return _____ (date)

Where the absence exceeds 7 calendar days, medical certificates were provided appropriately: Yes/No _____ (action)

I declare this form has been completed correctly: Yes/No _____ (action)

Signature: _____ Print: _____ Date: _____

**This form is available from the school office*

APPENDIX 2

Teachers Illness Certificate (CCU67) exemplar



CCU67

Department of Education

TEACHER'S ILLNESS CERTIFICATE

This form should be used to certify illness for 1 to 7 calendar days.

The completed form should be sent *without* delay to:-

Department of Education
Teachers' Pay & Pensions Team
(Pay Section)
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Gobnascale
LONDONDERRY
BT47 6FP

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): _____

Reference Number: TR _____

School/Institution: _____

School Reference Number : _____

I wish the period of absence detailed below to be treated as self certified sick leave.

From (first day of illness): _____

To: (last day of illness): _____

Nature of illness: _____

I understand that I must submit a doctor's statement from the 8th calendar day of a continuous period of sick leave.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**This form is available from the school office*

APPENDIX 3

Request for Leave Form

**This form is available from the school office*

HARMONY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leave Request Form

Employee Name :	Staff Number:
Reason for Leave Request:	
Date of Appointment:	
Leave from :	To :
Is Cover Required:	
Employee's Signature:	
Date of Request:	
Leave Request Granted:	Yes / No
Paid/Unpaid Leave:	Paid/Unpaid
Signature of Principal:	Date:
Notes/Comment :	

APPENDIX 4

Relationships with Pupils Outside of Work Declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff and volunteers of the school are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, youth organisations, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils. If you do not have any such relationships with pupils, please write NIL in the box.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

APPENDIX 5

Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct. I can also confirm that I have read understood and agree to comply with the following school policies, including, and not limited to:

- Administration on Medicines Policy [*on school website*]
- Acceptable use of ICT
- Anti-Bullying Policy [*on school website*]
- Child Protection Policy [*on school website*]
- Complaints Policy [*on school website*]
- Educational Trips Policy [*on school website*]
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy [*on school website*]
- Pastoral Care Policy [*on school website*]
- Positive Behaviour & Assertive Discipline Policy [*on school website*]
- Reasonable Force & Safe Handling Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy [*on school website*]
- Safer Internet Policy [*on school website*]
- Whistleblowing Policy

In addition, staff should be aware of attendance procedures as outlined in:

- Teacher Attendance Procedure (TNC 2008/2)
- Managing Attendance; Policy and Procedures All Education Authority Support Staff
- Teachers' Absences not exceeding three working days (Circular 2014/18)³

Name: _____

Placement Details: _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the principal.

³ Discretionary domestic leave for Classroom/Nursery Assistants is considered in accordance with arrangements for Teachers.