



Star Primary School Safe Working Practices for Staff and Volunteers

School Mission Statement:

At Star Primary School we believe that everyone is equally loved and accepted.

Acknowledging the diversity of our community, we...

- *Provide a broad and balance curriculum encouraging every child to take the opportunity to achieve their full potential;*
- *Nurture positive home, school and community relationships;*
- *Promote tolerance and respect for all people and the world we live in.*



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Safe Working Practices for Staff and Volunteers

Purpose of the policy:

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist staff and adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against staff who work with children and young people;
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

All staff that come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The Children Act 2004, through the Stay Safe outcome of the Every Child Matters Change for Children programme, places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. This includes the need to ensure that all staff who work with or on behalf of children and young people in these organisations are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The vast majority of staff who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of staffs can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children. It is therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and young people and ensure that the staffs working with them are safe to do so.

The guidance contained in this document has due regard to current legislation and statutory guidance.

Star Primary's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Head Teacher) and the Deputy DSL is the Child Safeguarding Officer.

In addition to this policy, all staff are required to read the School Safeguarding policy and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part I and appendix A (Revised Sept 2019). (All school policies are available on the school website and copies of Keeping Children Safe in Education are available from the school office or the Child Safeguarding Officer.)

What to do if you think a child is being abused?

All records of concern made by staff should be verbally checked with the PGL first unless it is a serious disclosure and the child is at risk, in which case the Deputy DSL/DSL should be informed ASAP.

A Record of Concern form should be completed via Safeguard software. In absence of the CSO, the Head Teacher or a member of SLT should be approached.

Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information.

- These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in interests of the child to do so. If in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential seek guidance from a senior member of staff, the DSL (Head Teacher) or the Deputy DSL (the Child Safeguarding Officer).
- Whilst staff need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets.
- Neither should they request this of a child young person under any circumstances

Power and Positions of Trust

Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Dress and Appearance

All staff should be suitably dressed –i.e. smart casual dress. It is inappropriate for staff to wear any revealing items of clothing such as low cut tops, very short skirts and see through garments. (Our expectations from pupils are high therefore we also should have appropriate high standards.) Please note that no tattoos or body piercing should be visible.

Gifts

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when staff may wish to give a child a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the staff has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with the senior manager and/or parent or carer.

Care should also be taken to ensure that staffs do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staffs e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Infatuations

Occasionally, a child may develop an infatuation with a member of staff. Staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned.

If a staff member is aware a child has an infatuation, they should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Headteacher/a member of the Senior Leadership Team or parent/carer so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication with Children and Young People (including the Use of technology)

Communication between children and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

Staff should not share any personal information with a child. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. If pupils attempt to contact or befriend staff online, this should be reported to the DSL or the Deputy DSL. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Staff should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between a staff and a child young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the school's policy.

(Please also see Star's ICT & E-Safety policy.)

Social Contact

If a child or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their manager or with the parent of the child. Staff should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

Sexual Contact

'Working Together to Safeguard Children'18, defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

There are occasions when staffs embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour.

This means that staff should not:

- Have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- Make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person
- Discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with the child with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, staff should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and staffs should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication.

- Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made.
- Where the child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary.
- When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Staff should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- Physical contact which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless there is explicit agreement on the need for, and nature of, that contact. This would then be part of a formally agreed plan or within the parameters of established, agreed and legal professional protocols on physical contact e.g. sport activities or medical procedures.
- Any such arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

If a staff member believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Child Safeguarding Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team outlined in the procedures for handling allegations and an appropriate record made. Parents/carers should also be informed in such circumstances.

Staff who work in certain settings, for example sports drama or outdoor activities will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with existing codes of conduct, regulations and best practice.

Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention

Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff must follow the school's behaviour policy, and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed.

In all cases where physical intervention is employed the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. This should include written and signed accounts of all those involved, including the child or young person. The parents/carers should be informed the same day.

Intimate Care

Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children on a regular basis, for example assisting young children with toileting, providing intimate care for children with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact should comply with professional codes of practice or guidance and/or be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability should be taken into account and be recorded as part of an agreed care plan. The emotional responses of any child to intimate care should be carefully and sensitively observed, and where necessary, any concerns passed to senior managers and/or parents/carers.

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible. The views of the child should be actively sought, wherever possible, when drawing up and reviewing formal arrangements. As with all individual arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated and recorded.

First aid and administration of medication

It is the duty of all staff to care for others, especially pupils, to the best of their capability. In an emergency, First Aid support and advice can be obtained from staff who have received training.

First Aid supplies are available in the following places:

- a) Minor First Aid Box is kept in the Medical Room by the Welfare Assistant and in the Nursery and First Aid Hut by the first aid trainer, who is responsible for checking and replenishing the contents when used. Minor first Aid bag is taken out at lunch times for any minor first aid requirements.
- b) Small Portable First Aid Bags are available for use on Educational Visits from the Medical Room. Teachers needing these bags should inform the First Aider at least 2 days before the visit is to take place.

Medication in School:

Parents are advised to, whenever possible to make arrangements for children to take medicines at home rather than in school. Where necessary the parent or nominated staff can come into school and administer the medication except for ones who are covered by a care plan e.g. Asthma pump, epipen.

All medicines must be securely stored in the Medical Room. Medicines in school are usually self-administered under the supervision of staff. Any variation of these arrangements must be discussed with the Head Teacher.

A record of administrations for medicines is made in the 'Medicine file' kept in medical room, school office and EYFS area.

Whistleblowing

The matter has to be kept strictly confidential and therefore only told to someone in authority. Failure to do so could result in allegations of spreading unsubstantiated rumours or gossip invoking the disciplinary procedure.

As a first step, concerns should be raised with the line manager or supervisor because the issue causing concern could be immediately clarified. This depends however on the seriousness and

sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the alleged wrongdoing or malpractice.

If the staff member believes that the manager or supervisor is involved, staff should raise their concerns with their Head Teacher or Chair of Governors. Where staff believe that the matter may not be dealt with properly, then they can raise their concerns with the Director of Children's Services, the Chief Executive or straight to Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud who have responsibility for investigating issues.

NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285

(Please also see the Safeguarding Policy and the appendix: Allegations against staffs who work with children referral form.)

Educational visits and after school clubs

Staff should always take care to have another staff present during out of school activities, unless agreed with senior staff. Health and Safety requirements should be strictly adhered to. (Please see Star's Health and Safety policy.)

All teachers planning any school trip or journey must:

- Consult with the Head Teacher in regard to the timing, arrangements, activities and level of staff/children supervision. Must complete Educational Visit form on online Evolve system.
- If the visit is to an unfamiliar site, make a preliminary visit and assess the risks and requirements.

The Newham guidance is available in the Educational Visit Co-ordinator File for further guidance.

The teacher in charge of the visit must complete "Risk Assessment School Visit" form on Evolve system a minimum of 2 weeks before the visit.

A letter giving guidance to parent helpers is also available.

First Aid kits are available from the medical room.

High visibility jackets should be worn by all pupils on all visits.

Photography, videos and other creative arts

The use of any images of children for publicity purposes will also require the appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians.

Staff should:

- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- Ensure consent is gained from the pupil and their legal guardians where being used for publicity purposes.
- Ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability.
- Be able to justify images of children in their possession.

Staff should check with the school office regarding parents/legal guardian's permission.

Permission is given via the school admission form and/or the Annual Parental Consent Form which is then updated on SIMs.

By order of the Governing Body of Star Primary School

(Signed) _____ Dated _____

(Head Teacher)

(Signed) _____ Dated _____

(Safeguarding and Inclusion Governor Team)

Policy Date: September 2020

Review Date: September 2021