

# **DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Staff Code of Conduct.**



**Staff Code of Conduct**  
**Statement of Values and Professional Practice**

**Introduction:**

Teachers and Classroom Assistants as a group have always understood the professional nature of their task. They have always been conscious of the special purpose behind their endeavours and how, in essence, they shape the future of society through their work with those young people entrusted to their care. That duty of care, allied to a sense of professional responsibility, is the hallmark of true professionals. In discharging this responsibility teachers have been guided by a set of values that, to date, have been implicit rather than explicit.

Values are often seen as aspirations or driving forces, often not openly articulated, which effectively shape people's lives and determine where they will direct their energies and what they will hold to be of importance. Many within our community have both understood and benefited from the profession's implicit values, and the commitment and professionalism that were an inevitable outcome of these. There is, however, merit in articulating those values of only to celebrate the high ethical standards that underpin the work of teachers in Northern Ireland and in Drumahoe P.S. This code provides our teachers, for the first time, with an explicit and public statement of values and professional practice. The values enshrined within the Code are also those that underpin the work of the G.T.C.N.I. and will inform its deliberations in regard to internal policy development and external policy initiatives.

**The Code seeks to:**

- set out clearly the core values underpinning professional practice;
- encourage attitudes and conduct commensurate with the core values of the profession;
- provide a framework for evaluating both policies and practice; and
- enhance the status of the profession in the eyes of the public and our parents.

The code effectively incorporates the core values articulated within the Teacher Competences Framework and those set out by the Nolan Committee.

**Core Values:**

The core values of the profession are as follows:

<b>Trust</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Commitment</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>Fairness</b>	<b>Equality</b>
<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>Service</b>

A commitment to service lies at the heart of professional behaviour. In addition, members of our staff will exemplify the values listed above in their working and in their relationships with others; recognising in particular the unique and privileged relationship that exists between teachers and their pupils. In keeping with the spirit of professional service and commitment, teachers will at all times be conscious of their responsibilities to others: learners, colleagues and indeed the profession itself.

## **A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children/young people.**

### **Introduction:**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

### **Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct supplements the Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Code of Conduct and is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child protection by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and offering advice on prudent conduct.

#### **Private Meetings with Pupils**

- a. Teachers should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply teachers are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- c. Where possible another pupil or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.

#### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

Staff should not feel inhibited from responding to the needs of the child and offering physical comfort as a caring parent would provide. However this should only occur when the child is in agreement.

- a. All touch should be governed by the age/developmental stage of the child.
- b. Staff should not touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- c. Physical punishment is illegal as in any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- d. Members of staff who have to administer first aid should ensure that wherever possible, that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- e. Any physical contact which is likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observers should be avoided.
- f. If any physical contact could be construed as inappropriate, the member of staff should inform the Principal in writing at the earliest possible opportunity.
- g. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting or in an approved out of school activity where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity of pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school environment.

## **Restraint**

Staff can use reasonable force:

- a. To prevent injury to the child, other children, themselves or a member of staff.
- b. To prevent damage to school property.
- c. To prevent the commission of an offence.
- d. The rights of a member of staff to use reasonable force to restrain a pupil applies on the premises of the school or elsewhere at a time when he/she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.
- e. Staff should inform the Principal after any incident where reasonable force has been used – see Use of Reasonable Force Policy.
- f. There should be a written account made of the incident in order to prevent any misunderstanding or misinterpretation. The account should include the names of those involved, when and where the incident took place, names of witnesses, a brief account of the steps taken to defuse the situation and the outcome of the incident.

## **Choice and Use of Materials**

- a. Seek parental permission before using materials of a sensitive nature.
- b. Teachers should avoid teaching materials which might be misinterpreted.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult the Principal before using it.

## **Relationships and Attitudes**

Staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff of either sex is dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

## **Handling Conversations of a Sensitive Nature**

Staff should:

- a. Listen and accept information.
- b. Take notes, explaining to the child why you are doing so.
- c. Reassure the child.
- d. Not make promises about the future.
- e. Refer the conversation to the Safeguarding Team.

## **Photographic Images**

- a. With the written consent of parents, on behalf of pupils, the school permits the appropriate taking of images by staff and pupils with school equipment.
- b. Staff are **not permitted** to use personal digital equipment, such as mobile phones and cameras, to record images of pupils, this includes when on field trips. However with the express permission of the Principal, images can be taken provided they are transferred immediately and solely to the school's network and deleted from the staff device.

## **Internet Use**

- a. Teachers should supervise access to Internet resources (where reasonable) through the school's fixed and mobile internet technology.
- b. Teachers will preview any recommended sites before use.
- c. Raw image searches are discouraged when working with pupils.
- d. If Internet research is set for homework, specific sites will be suggested that have previously been checked by the teacher. It is advised that parents recheck these sites and supervise this work. Parents will be advised to supervise any further research.

### **Personal Mobile Devices (including Phones – see also Mobile Phone policy)**

The school allows staff to bring in personal mobile phones and devices for their own use at appropriate times. Under no circumstances does the school allow a member of staff to contact a pupil or parent/ carer using their personal device.

- a. The sending of inappropriate text messages between any member of the school community is not allowed.
- b. Permission must be sought before any image or sound recordings are made on these devices of any member of the school community.
- c. Staff bringing personal devices into school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.

### **Intimate Care and S.E.N. – see also Intimate Care Policy**

You may be required to provide intimate care for children who have special educational needs. The following guidelines must be followed:

- a. Ensure permission has been obtained from parents to change children (see Appendix 10 'Changing Procedures for Children with Special Educational Needs'). If possible, ensure that you are accompanied by another staff member. Members of staff will sign and date the 'Intimate Care Record Sheet'.
- b. Encourage children, where possible, to change their own clothes, while talking them through the process.
- c. Ensure as much privacy is afforded to the child as possible.

### **Intimate Care & Foundation Stage Pupils**

It may be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for these younger children in their care. Children may be upset and need to be comforted. They may have a toileting accident and need to have their clothes changed. To fail to do these things for a young child would be negligent. In order to safeguard the child and protect, the following code of conduct will be adhered to at all times:

- a. Children will be encouraged to adjust clothing, etc themselves when using the toilet.
- b. Only trained staff members will be permitted to accompany them to the toilet.
- c. When taking child/children to the toilet, the adult will inform another member of staff.
- d. Children who wet their clothes after a toileting accident will be given clean replacements and encouraged to change themselves as much as possible.
- e. If a child soils themselves, their previously given contacts will be telephoned in the order given to request that they are changed by a parent or another adult who has the parents' consent to clean and change the child.
- f. In all toileting accidents, the child's parent/s will be informed by the class teacher, the classroom assistant or the school secretary.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible to cover all the circumstances in which teachers and Classroom Assistants inter-relate with pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances their professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers and Classroom Assistants this Code of Conduct confirms what has always been their practice.