



Staff Code of Conduct

December 2021

Date	December 2021
Review Frequency	Two years
Date for Next Review	December 2023

Steel River Academy Trust is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all employees.

Steel River Academy Trust is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

The Trust fosters a culture of the highest professional standards. The achievement of positive outcomes for our children necessitates the need to ensure that all adults working with children are competent, confident and safe to do so. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon all adults including staff, volunteers, Trustees and governors to abide by it. Therefore, all staff at Steel River Academy Trust are expected to comply with the following Code of Conduct. Teaching staff are furthermore expected to conduct themselves within the guidance of the 'personal and professional conduct' section of the Teachers' Standards. Also, Teaching Assistants should refer to the requirements of the Teaching Assistant's Standards. All Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual orientation.

Staff are expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of Steel River Academy Trust. In addition, staff are required to develop and maintain the professional character of the schools within the Trust.

Staff may be in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards. Each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Trust whether inside or outside working hours.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe.

Behaviour

All staff who work at Steel River Academy Trust must set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore not use inappropriate or offensive language at any time.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- radicalisation

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to a school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection.

The school's DSL and DDSLs will follow policy and procedures linked to safeguarding.

Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take the upmost care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phone as a camera in school. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers/devices.

Staff who are in contact with pupils can only use their mobile phones in school during their break times in the staff room or private area away from the children.

Pupils

Staff must comply with Trust/school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues, schools and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

Integrity

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money.

Conduct Outside Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust/school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal. In addition, Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. **Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook with pupils or former pupils under the age of 18.**

Staff should not accept parents of pupils in the school as ‘friends’ on social networking sites.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, schools or wider community into disrepute.

Staff should ensure that they follow and apply the same agreed standards of the staff behaviour policy when working remotely or providing remote home learning to children.

Staff should also refer to the School’s ‘**Safer Use of ICT**’ Policies

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the individual.

However, staff have an obligation to share with the Headteacher or school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. Such matters should only be discussed with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the situation and not discussed with other colleagues or outside of school, including with the pupil’s parent or carer.

Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Disciplinary Action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Advice and Guidance for Staff

When we speak to others we will:

- use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable.
- speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the workplace or in schools, so that colleagues, parents, children and outside agencies can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.

- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce.
- work within the policies and practices set out by Steel River Academy Trust, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the Trust.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately in accordance with the individual school's Staff Handbook guidance.
- behave in a positive and calm way despite any challenging circumstances we may be facing both inside and outside of school, especially in front of children.

Whistle Blowing – Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Steel River Academy Trust has a clear and accessible whistle blowing policy (which can be found on the Trust website) that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. In accordance with the Trust's Whistle Blowing Policy, staff should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern to either the Head teacher or to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate.

Home Visits – Staff are not permitted to visit the home of a student unless pre-arranged and the Headteacher and the designated Safeguarding Lead are informed. The appointment must be logged. No young person should ever be invited into the home of a staff member.

Behaviour Management - All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff must follow the Behaviour Policy.

Dress and appearance – staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. Staff should ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work. This usually means smart professional dress for **all** teaching, support and administrative staff. (Please see school's dress code outlined in the individual staff handbooks).

Attendance and Punctuality – Staff are expected to strive for 100% attendance and punctuality including INSET days, except for sickness, approved compassionate grounds, or where punctuality is concerned, unforeseen or circumstances outside of the individual's control. Staff absence is to be notified by 8a.m. on the first day of absence. You should phone The Headteacher to let her know and then inform your Team leader by 7.30am where possible with details of the work for your classes and an estimate of your return date. Holidays are to be taken as per the school's published term dates.

Teaching staff should arrive in school by 8.30am to prepare for their day and should remain in teaching areas until at least 3.30pm

All staff will be provided with and must wear photo identification at all times during working hours.

Low Level Concerns

Introduction

At Steel River Academy Trust, we take safeguarding very seriously. This includes ensuring that adults who work with children do so in a way that is in accordance with the ethos and policies set out by the school, including the Staff Code of Conduct. Below are the details and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have.

Summary

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head Teacher about their concern. If the Head Teacher cannot be contacted, the Trust Executive Leader should be contacted instead.

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

407. As part of their whole school approach to safeguarding, schools and colleges should ensure that they promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

408. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold (see Part Four - Section one)) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable schools and colleges to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

What is a low level concern?

409. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.*

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

- being over friendly with children;*
- having favourites;*
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;*
- 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.*

411. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

412. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

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.

Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up information

Low Level Concerns information will be stored securely by the Head Teacher. The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Head Teacher or those aware in the senior leadership team.

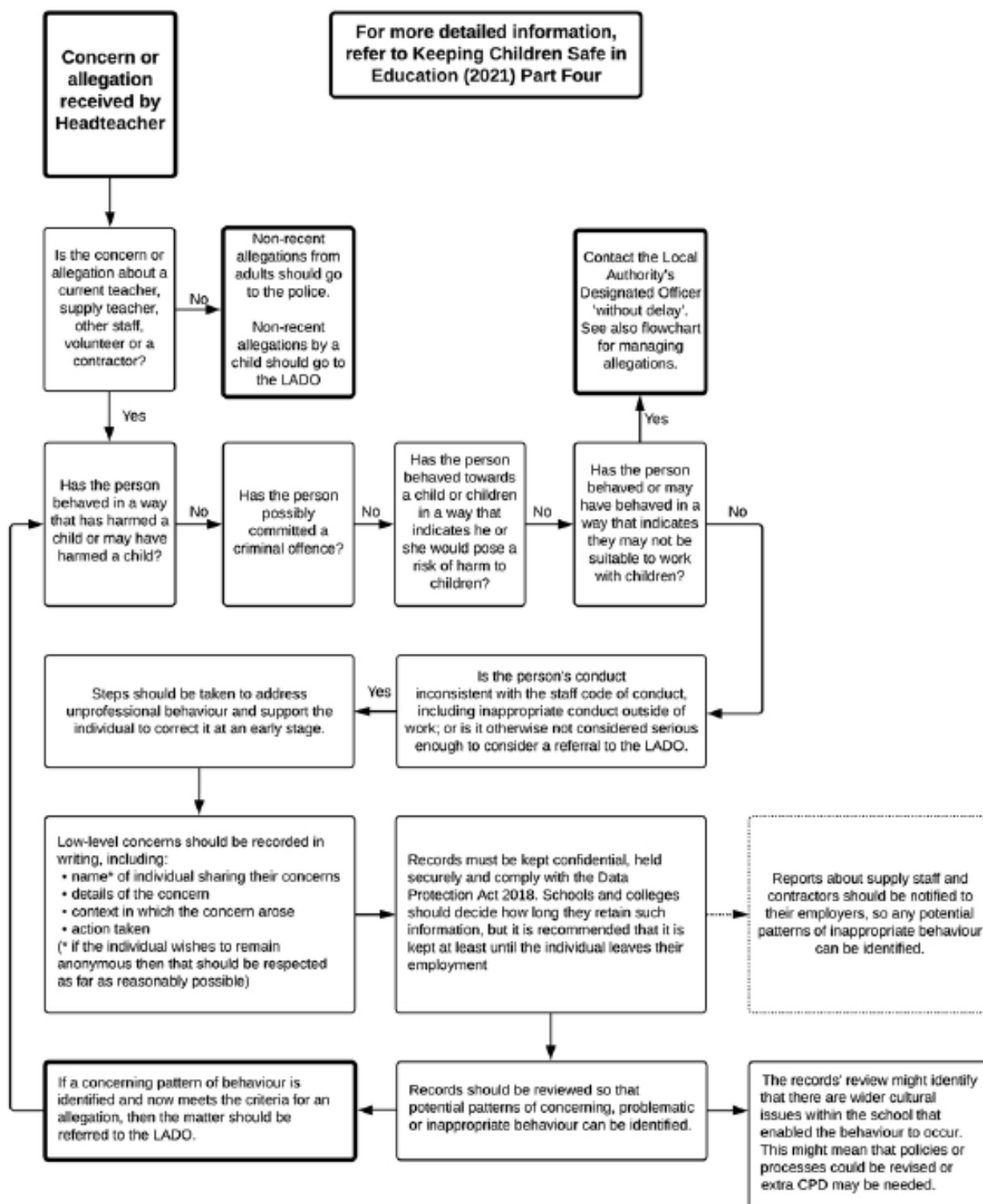
Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures.

Whenever staff leave Bankfields Primary, any record of low-level concerns which are stored about them will be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept.

Consideration will be given to:

- a) whether some or all of the information contained within any record may have any reasonably likely value in terms of any potential historic employment or abuse claim so as to justify keeping it, in line with normal safeguarding records practice; or
- (b) if, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

Process to follow when a Low-Level Concern is raised



Key Reference Document

Read this document for further information about Low-Level Concerns, which is referenced in KCSIE 2021.

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/clients-and-sectors/safeguarding/low-level-concerns-guidance-2020.pdf>