



## St Alban's Catholic Primary School

### Code of Conduct for Staff 2023-2024

“Love one another as I have loved you” (Our Mission)

#### INTRODUCTION

As an employer, the Governing Body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school Employees. As a Catholic School, all adults in school are expected to actively follow and live out our mission statement.

The mission statement reflects how the family of St Alban's is to conduct itself at all times. All communication and interaction between members of the family of St Alban's - staff, children, parents, carers and visitors must reflect our mission statement.

Furthermore, as part of the Catholic Education Service terms and conditions, staff are:

- expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the School.
- required to develop and maintain the Catholic character of the School.
- to have regard to the Catholic character of the School and not do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the School at any time - at work or at home.

All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012'.

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

#### **1. Aims, scope and principles**

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

As a member of a Catholic school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## 3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality ➤  
Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within ➤  
Adhere to the Teachers' Standards
- Follow the school's Whole school procedures – e.g. School behaviour policy

## 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures in the staff room and from the school office, as well as in the policies section of our school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

Staff must make themselves familiar with the Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 part 1 and Whistleblowing Procedure.

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

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

Staff must not use their mobile phone as a camera in school to take photographs of any child.

Any photograph/video of children must be taken using school equipment unless permission sought from the headteacher

### 4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or ➤  
Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘case manager’ will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

## **4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children ➤  
Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can’t easily be seen ➤  
Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available in the policies section of our school website.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

## **4.3 Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff’s health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the [headteacher/other member of staff, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing board.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## **5. Staff-pupil relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that: ➤ This takes place in a public place that others can access

➤ Others can see in to the room

➤ A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **6. Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## **8. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **9. Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £30 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. Cross reference the above amount with your gifts and hospitality policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## **10. Dress code**

- Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.
- Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up if possible.
- Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

## **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the full governing board at the first Governing Board Meeting in September 2023.

St Alban's governing body will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## **13. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

➤ Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct

➤ Staff grievance procedures

➤ Child protection and safeguarding ➤

Online safety

➤ Whistle-blowing

Written / ratified or	Signature:	Next review:
reviewed:		
Autumn Term 2023		Autumn Term 2024

## Appendix 1 – aide memoire for all staff

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- 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.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- 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 school, so that parents and children 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 so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
  - work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the governors.
  - treat everyone with respect.
  - dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work.
  - behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.
  - Ensure that all victims are taken seriously, supported and kept safe especially anyone who has experienced sexual harassment or abuse.

## **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### Appendix 2- **from** *Teachers' Standards Effective from 1 September 2012 (DfE)*

- A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.
- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and
  - at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
  - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
  - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils
  - vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.



- Appendix 3 – **from** *Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1 2023*

## **Staff roles and responsibilities (KCSiE 2023)**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

### **All staff should:**

- Make sure that any decisions made are in the **best interests of the child**.
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- Know about (and feel confident to use) school safeguarding systems, including:
- Policies on child protection, pupil behaviour and staff behaviour (your code of conduct)
- Your safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The role and identity of your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and any deputies

### **They need to know:**

- How to identify children who may benefit from early help, what your local early help process is and their role in it
- How to make referrals to children's social care and for the statutory assessments that may follow a referral, and their role in these assessments

### **Overview:**

- How to identify signs of abuse and neglect, and what to do if a child makes a disclosure
- That safeguarding incidents and behaviours can happen between children outside school and be linked to factors outside school
- That children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families (e.g. sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines), and consider when this might be the case
- How to maintain confidentiality by only involving those who need to be involved
- That they should never promise a child confidentiality
- That victims of abuse should know they'll be taken seriously, be supported and kept safe. They shouldn't be made to feel ashamed for making a report or that they're creating a problem

Appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) should be **given at induction**, which is then **regularly updated**. And they should receive safeguarding updates at least annually, for example via email or staff meetings.

### **Responding to concerns - staff should:**

- Act immediately
- Follow your child protection policy
- Speak to your DSL (or deputy) as soon as they can

### **The DSL may then choose to:**

- Manage any support for the child internally using the school's pastoral support

processes

- Do an early help assessment
- Make a referral for statutory services

**If the DSL or deputy is not available, staff should:**

- Not delay taking action
- Speak to a member of the senior leadership team (SLT)
- Contact the Integrated Front Door(IFD), if appropriate, and follow advice

- Tell the DSL or deputy about any actions taken as soon as possible

**If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, staff should:**

- Make a referral to IFD (and the police, if appropriate - get guidance on when to call the police) immediately
- Keep a log of all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions (this information should be kept confidential and stored securely)
- Discuss any uncertainties about recording requirements with the DSL or deputy

**Staff should know what poor practice looks like, this includes:**

- Failing to act on the early signs of abuse and neglect
- Poor record keeping
- Failing to listen to the views of the child
- Failing to reassess concerns where the situation does not improve
- Not sharing information, or sharing it too slowly
- Not challenging those who aren't taking action

**Concerns about a staff member (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children**

You should have procedures in place to manage any safeguarding concerns about staff members. Staff should tell the headteacher immediately if they:

- Have safeguarding concerns that a member of staff is posing a risk of harm to pupils
- Are making an allegation against another member of staff
- If the concerns relate to the headteacher, the staff member must tell the chair of governors.
- If the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, the staff member must tell the local authority designated officer (LADO). If you have concerns or an allegation is made about another staff member and there's a conflict of interest in reporting to the headteacher, this should also be directly reported to the LADO.

**Concerns about safeguarding practice**

Staff should follow your whistle-blowing procedures if they're worried about poor or unsafe practice so these concerns can be raised with the senior leadership team (SLT).

They can contact the NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline if they:

- Are unable to talk to the headteacher or chair of governors
- Feel that their genuine concerns aren't being addressed

**Staff should know the indicators of abuse and neglect**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and can take the form of:

**Physical abuse** - involving hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This can also be caused by a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing illness in a child

**Emotional abuse** - persistent emotional maltreatment, which causes severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development

**Sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

**Behaviours linked to issues that can put children in danger - These include:**

- Drug use

- Alcohol abuse
- Deliberately missing education
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos
- child-on-child abuse
- All staff should be aware that children can abuse other pupils, both inside and outside of school, including through:
- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Intimate personal relationships

- Physical abuse (which may include an online element)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (which may include an online element)
- Sexual harassment, including online harassment
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as 'sexting')
- Upskirting (which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothes without their permission)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals, which may include an online element
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE)

**Staff should know that CCE and CSE:**

- Are forms of abuse where a person or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity:
- In exchange for something the child needs or wants and/or;
- For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator(s) or facilitator(s) and/or;
- Through violence or the threat of violence
- Can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation

**In relation to CCE, staff should also know:**

- The common forms it can take (including drug trafficking through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, and committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence)
- Children may become trapped as they or their families may be threatened with violence and they may be trapped or coerced into debt or
- carrying weapons, or they carry them as a form of protection

**For headteachers, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) teams and governors.**

- Governing boards (and proprietors of independent schools) have strategic leadership responsibility for your school's safeguarding arrangements.

**Your Governing board must:**

- Make sure they comply with their duties under legislation
- Make sure your school's policies, procedures and training are effective, comply with legislation and are in line with KCSIE
- Appoint a board member responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements
- Facilitate a whole-school or college approach to safeguarding - safeguarding and child protection to be "at the forefront" and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development

**Make sure your DSL team members are:**

- From the SLT
- Has the duty of lead responsibility for safeguarding explicitly in their job description
- Making sure children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and where necessary teaching is adapted for vulnerable children, victims abuse and some pupils with

special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities

- Acknowledging children involved in criminal exploitation need to be treated as victims themselves (particularly older children), even though they may commit crimes themselves
- Aware that Girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too, even though their experience may be different, it can be exploitative even if the activity appears to be consensual
- It can happen online, as well as in person

### **Serious violence**

All staff should also be aware of the indicators that children may be at risk from, or are involved in, serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Changing friendships, or forming friendships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or assault, or unexplained injuries
- Significant change in wellbeing
- Unexplained gifts or possessions
- They should also know the associated risks and the measures in place to manage these.

**Staff should also know the risk factors that increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as:**

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Mental health

**Staff should be aware:**

- That mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- That experiences of abuse, neglect and other traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact
- How these experiences can affect children's mental health, behaviour and education
- Staff should know that only trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, but that all staff should:
  - Observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one

**Always report a mental health concern about a child (that's also a safeguarding concern) by following your school's child protection policy and speaking to the DSL or deputy**