

Balderstone St Leonard's CE Primary School



Staff Code of Conduct (including social media usage, ethical standards policy)

Policy Written: August 2026 in line with Lancashire guidance

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 All members of the school community are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all staff employed in schools across Lancashire and this policy reflects relevant legislation and expectations applying to all employees working in such establishments.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 This document sets out a code of conduct for all staff in schools with delegated

budgets. This policy is intended to:

- give clear guidance to all concerned regarding appropriate conduct in the workplace;
- enable schools to set out clear expectations of all staff in order to minimise the likelihood of misconduct in the workplace;
- comply with legislation that affects staff employed in educational settings.

2.2 This policy has been the subject of consultation between the Authority and the recognised Trade Unions and Teacher Associations.

2.3 This policy has been adopted and is published as part of the staffing policies of the Governing Body of Balderstone St Leonard's CE Primary school and Brambles nursery.

3. APPLICATION

3.1 This procedure applies to all staff employed in Balderstone St Leonard's.

3.2 Reference to 'Headteacher' throughout this document should read 'Chair of Governors' in the case of the conduct of the Headteacher.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Code sets out the minimum standards that should apply and is not exhaustive.(See Section 6 for further details)

4.2 It is recommended that this document is shared with all staff on appointment and those in current employment and that a copy is included in the schools staff handbook.

4.3 Employees whose conduct fails to meet the standards of conduct as set out in this document may be regarded as being in breach of discipline and may be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Staff are expected to fulfil the obligations placed upon them under the terms of their contract of employment, i.e.

- Be ready and willing to work as specified in their role definition/Job Description
- Conduct their work in a co-operative manner.
- Attend work

- Be punctual in time keeping
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Obey reasonable management instructions
- Take care of themselves, their colleagues and others while at work
- Take care of school property
- Familiarise themselves with, and follow the Health and Safety rules applicable in their school
- Compliance with the school's Smoking at Work Policy.

6. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 Teachers are expected to adhere to the Teachers Standards as set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.
- 6.2 All staff are expected to adhere to and conduct themselves in line with the Department for Education's ['Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings , February, 2022'](#)
- 6.3 All staff are expected to adhere to and conduct themselves in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance for school and colleges on [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)

7. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Professional Conduct

All staff are expected to:-

- Accept and adhere to school policies and procedures
- Undertake their duties and responsibilities effectively, efficiently and diligently.
- Show respect for all members of the school community by being polite, courteous and refraining from the use of inappropriate language in all forms of communication eg verbal, face to face and electronic communications. In particular, staff should be aware that in accordance with The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 which came into force October 2024, any form of sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information (particularly relating to pupils) obtained in the course of their employment. Any information obtained in the course of employment should be not used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed on to others who might use it in the same way. Any queries about what constitutes 'sensitive' information and who it can be shared with should be directed to the appropriate member of the school's leadership team or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- v. Ensure fairness at all times when dealing with customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub contractors. No special favour should be given to current/former employees or partners/relatives or associates.
- vi. Comply with the school's [Statement of Ethical Standards](#) in relation to the acceptance of gifts in cash or kind and hospitality noting that it is a criminal offence under the Bribery Act 2010 to offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or to request, agree or accept or receive a bribe from another person.
- vii. Declare any interests (financial or otherwise) that may be considered as being in conflict with the school's interests.
- viii. Use appropriate lines of communication and/or the relevant procedure to express views relating to their employment or the activities of the school.
- ix. Have no contact with the media regarding school matters without the express permission of the Headteacher.
- x. Notify the Headteacher of any known or suspected breaches of the law or of the school's policies, procedures and regulations and co-operate with any investigation of such breaches. This is particularly important in relation to the safeguarding of children, including the reporting of low level concerns which do not meet the harm threshold, health and safety and financial irregularity, acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media. Where this is considered not possible, reference should be made to the school's whistleblowing policy.
- xi. Disclose on appointment or at any time any civil/criminal charges, convictions or being the subject of a criminal investigation process (being charged or in possession of a conviction may not necessarily debar from appointment/employment or lead to disciplinary action; however failure to disclose where required will be considered as a serious act of misconduct).
- xii. Provide accurate information on the Annual Staff Confirmation Form and notify the Headteacher of any changes to your circumstances that may impact on the information provided on the Annual Staff Confirmation Form.
- xiii. Use school equipment provided for the purposes of carrying out their role in a responsible and lawful manner.
- xiv. Not provide a professional reference on behalf of the school unless the contents of such reference have been agreed by the Headteacher.
- xv. Disclose to the School on appointment, or at any time following appointment, if subject to any ongoing investigation into any matter which may bring into question suitability to work in a school, if a referral has been made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and their application status is 'under consideration', 'minded to bar' or if they are 'barred' from working with vulnerable

groups, including children, or if they are under investigation regarding the care of their own children/children they regularly care for

Personal Conduct

All staff are expected to:

- i. Ensure that personal relationships do not affect their professional role and do not bring the school into disrepute.
- ii. Notify the Headteacher either at appointment or during employment of any personal relationship in or outside of school which may result in honesty, objectivity or integrity being brought into question.
- iii. Notify the Headteacher of any change in personal (including medical) circumstances which could impact on ability to carry out their role.
- iv. Not engage in outside employment (eg private tutoring of the school's own pupils) which could be considered as undermining or conflicting with the business of the school.
- v. Wear any uniform, clothes, overalls or protective clothing as required for their role in school.
- vi. Dress in a way which is appropriate for a school setting and which reflects Section 8 of the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those who working With Children and Young people in Education Settings'.
- vii. Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times when wearing clothing or an identification badge that identifies them as an employee of the school
- viii. Declare any interest/involvement with any outside organisations which may benefit financially or contractually from decisions taken by the school, eg the procurement of goods or services.
- ix. Conduct themselves both on and off duty (including use of social media – See [Model Policy On The Use Of Social Networking Sites And Other Forms Of Social Media](#)) in a manner compatible with their employment status with the school.
- x. Ensure personal hygiene and appearance is respective of being employed in a school setting.
- xi. Act appropriately in terms of their behaviour, the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school resources at all times, and should not use school resources for party political purposes.

POLICY ON THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND OTHER FORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

This Policy has been developed in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions and professional Associations.

1. PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the school's position regarding the use of social networking sites and other forms of social media. The aim of the document is to ensure that all employees are fully aware of the risks associated with using such sites and their responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding and protection of both children and themselves.

2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all staff employed in delegated schools and those Teachers employed in Centrally Managed Services.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The use of social networking/media/messaging sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Whatsapp has over recent years become a popular form of communication between friends and family.

3.2 It would not be reasonable to expect or instruct employees not to use these sites which, if used with caution, should have no impact whatsoever on their role in school. Indeed, appropriate use of some sites may also have professional benefits. For example many schools now use sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and X as a means to enhance parental engagement.

3.3 It is now widely acknowledged that use of such sites does not provide a completely private platform for personal communications. Even when utilised sensibly and with caution employees are vulnerable to their personal details being exposed to a wider audience than they might otherwise have intended. One example of this is when photographs and comments are published by others without the employees consent or knowledge which may portray the employee in a manner which is not conducive to their role in school.

3.4 Difficulties arise when staff utilise these sites and they do not have the relevant knowledge or skills to ensure adequate security and privacy settings. In addition there are some cases when employees deliberately use these sites to communicate with and/or form inappropriate relationships with children and young people.

4. GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

4.1 Employees who choose to make use of social networking sites/media should be advised as follows:-

- (i) That they should not access these sites for personal use during working hours;
- (ii) That they familiarise themselves with the site's 'privacy settings' in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended;
- (iii) That they do not conduct or portray themselves in a manner which may:-
 - bring the school into disrepute;
 - lead to valid parental complaints;
 - be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
 - be deemed as derogatory towards pupils and/or parents and carers;

- bring into question their appropriateness to work with children and young people.
- (iv) That they do not form on-line 'friendships' or enter into communication with *parents/carers and pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised.
- (v) On-line friendships and communication with former pupils should be strongly discouraged particularly if the pupils are under the age of 18 years.
- (vi) That they could face legal proceedings if comments they post about named individuals are found to have harmed their reputation.

*(*In some cases employees in schools/services are related to parents/carers and/or pupils or may have formed on-line friendships with them prior to them becoming parents/carers and/or pupils of the school/service. In these cases employees should be advised that the nature of such relationships has changed and that they need to be aware of the risks of continuing with this method of contact. They should be advised that such contact is contradictory to this Policy and as such they are potentially placing themselves at risk of formal action being taken under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.)*

4.2 Schools should not access social networking sites in order to 'vet' prospective employees.

Such practice could potentially create an un-level playing field and lead to claims of discrimination if for example the selection panel were to discover a candidate held a protective characteristic as defined by the Equality Act.

5. **SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

Communicating with both current and former pupils via social networking sites or via other non-school related mechanisms such as personal e-mails and text messaging can lead to employees being vulnerable to serious allegations concerning the safeguarding of children and young people.

The Department for Education document ' [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#) states:-

12. Communication with children (including the use of technology) In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used. Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.) Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour' Staff should not give their personal contact details to children for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers,	<i>This means that adults should:</i> ▪ not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work ▪ not give out their personal details ▪ use only the equipment and internet services provided by the school or setting, unless school policies state otherwise ▪ only use internet-enabled personal devices in line with school acceptable use policies ▪ follow their school / setting's acceptable use policy and online safety guidance ▪ ensure that their use of technologies could not bring their employer into disrepute ▪ not discuss or share data relating to children/ parents / carers in staff social media groups <i>This means that education settings should:</i> • wherever possible, provide school devices such as cameras and mobile phones rather than
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details of web-based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable. Staff should, in any communication with children, also follow the guidance in section 7 'Standards of Behaviour'. Staff should adhere to their establishment's policies, including those with regard to communication with parents and carers and the information they share when using the internet.	<i>expecting staff to use their own (e.g. on school trips)</i>
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6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That this policy document is shared on an annual basis with all staff who come into contact with children and young people, that it is retained in Staff Handbooks and that it is specifically referred to when inducting new members of staff into your school/service.
- (ii) That appropriate links are made to this document with your school/services Acceptable Use Policy
- (iii) That employees are encouraged to consider any guidance issued by their professional association/trade union concerning the use of social networking sites
- (iv) That employees are informed that disciplinary action may be taken in relation to those members of staff who conduct themselves in a way which is contrary to the advice and guidance outlined in this Policy. If such conduct is deemed to amount to gross misconduct this may lead to dismissal.