

Carrick Primary School



Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers, Students, Substitute Members of Staff, Coaches and Tutors

September 2023

Carrick Primary School **Vision Statement**

Forward Together: “Ar aghaidh le chéile”.

Mission Statement

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, in order to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and encourage parents to assist us in helping children to learn and to become lifelong learners.

School Aims

We aim to:

- develop and strengthen each pupil’s understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- endorse the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention;
- involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.
- **We, the staff of Carrick Primary School, endorse the Convention on the Rights of the Child and will continue to work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention.**

Code of Conduct

In Carrick Primary School we want all our pupils and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the educational experiences which our school offers.

Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors in school have a privileged position in working with young people. They need to be accountable for the manner in which they interact with children and conduct themselves around them, both inside and outside school. By the very nature of the context of school and its activities, staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors need to follow a Code of Conduct. Equally children and parents have the right to expect that all staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors in school will behave appropriately and act professionally at all times.

As staff members, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors, we are mindful that our behaviour towards our pupils should always be above reproach and we acknowledge the need to exercise caution in our dealings with the children in our care.

We subscribe to the following good practice in this area:

- When the need arises to talk to a pupil individually, it is important to let another member of staff know that the meeting is happening and where it will be taking place. The venue should, if at all possible, have a window and, if this is not so, a door should be left ajar. However, where this is not possible, another member of staff should be present when a pupil is being spoken to.
- It is good practice to avoid **unnecessary** physical contact with our pupils. We acknowledge, however, that it is neither practical nor desirable to suggest that there should be no physical contact and we would not wish to see a distressed child deprived of a reassuring or comforting touch because of a fear of physical contact. Where a pupil indicates, however, that he/she is uncomfortable with such contact it should never take place. Additionally, it is best practice to avoid any physical contact which might be open to misinterpretation by the child or by others.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or others around them, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations. At Carrick Primary School we have a policy on Safe Handling which sets out procedures to be followed in this instance.

- Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors will not make inappropriate, personal comments about a child's appearance or dress.
- Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors will treat pupils with respect and fairness, without favour or preference.
- Relationships with parents should always be courteous.
- Relationships between staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors should always be professional.
- Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors will follow the Internet Safety Policy, and are not permitted to give pupils access to their personal mobile phone numbers or to their personal email addresses. All electronic communications with pupils should be via the official school emailing system.
- **Social Networking** sites present particular difficulties for staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff, parents and pupils at all times. No member of our staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff or tutors will communicate with the pupils via social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community (including pupils, parents, staff, volunteers, coaches, tutors, substitute members of staff, Board of Governors and school events/incidents) should never be posted on personal, social networking sites. Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others sites (e.g. friends and family) which may not have the privacy settings recommended.
- Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors may only take photographs with school cameras and images are to be erased after display, except those in pupils' portfolios or evidence books. Copies of photographs are not to be downloaded for personal records or for personal use.
- Mobile phones must be switched onto silent mode during contractual hours. They may be used during break-time and lunch time. Use of mobile phones is not permitted during working hours unless in exceptional circumstances.
- Pupils are not permitted to keep mobile phones or any other electronic devices with them in school. They may leave them in the Principal's office before 9.00am and collect them at home time.
- We value greatly the relationships which exist between staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors in our school and we would wish to see those maintained. It is always necessary,

however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional so that the warm and caring atmosphere which is an integral part of our community and which is so nourishing for everyone, is enabled to flourish.

- Staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors should be particularly careful when interacting with pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.
- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and lead to questions about the motives for the choice. If in doubt about the appropriateness of particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.
- Following any incident where a member of staff, volunteer, coach, student, substitute member of staff or tutor feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.

Confidentiality

Members of staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or their family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff, volunteer, coach, student or substitute members of staff may be expected to share information about a child for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff, volunteer, coach, student, tutor or substitute member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a the Designated/Deputy Designated

Teacher or from the Principal. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Principal.

The Designated Teacher is Mrs Claire Kelly (P1 Teacher). The Deputy Designated Teachers are Mrs McPolin (P3 Teacher) and Mr D Keenan (P6 Teacher).

Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen and to support the pupils, they must not promise confidentiality or request children to do the same under any circumstances.

Additionally, concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed on the designated teacher for Child Protection.

Relationships and Attitudes

Staff members, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, always taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Verbal Interaction

All verbal exchanges in school shall be conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, will voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Verbally humiliating or frightening pupils as a means of punishment is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations but the humour used must be understood and appropriate.

Professional Dress

Casual dress is frequently perceived as indicative of a casual attitude. Everyone needs to play a part in ensuring that acceptable professional dress is always adhered to in order to present a professional image of Carrick Primary School, in which everyone can have confidence. Trousers are perfectly acceptable but blue denim jeans are not. Casual or sports clothes are appropriate on Sports Day, days on which staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors are taking or assisting with a PE lesson, trips and/or training days. If anyone is in doubt about what is acceptable, please ask for clarification from the Principal or Vice Principal.

Allegations of Abuse

Appendix A provides details of the procedures which will be followed in the event of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, volunteer, coach, student, substitute member of staff or tutor.

Appendix B provides details of the procedures which will be followed in the event of any allegations of abuse by someone other than a member of staff, volunteer, coach, student, substitute member of staff or tutor.

Appendix C provides details of the procedures to be followed if a parent is making a complaint.

Use of School's Internet Facilities

Appendix D provides details about the school's Code of Conduct for use of the School's internet facilities by staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors.

Receipt of the Code of Conduct

Members of staff, volunteers, coaches, students, tutors and substitute members of staff are asked to sign and return Appendix E to confirm that they have received and will adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Conclusion to Code of Conduct

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff or tutors interact with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of staff members, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors, this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their good practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for staff, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships or interaction with children/young people or their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

Monitoring of the Code of Conduct

The monitoring of the actions described in this Code of Conduct is the responsibility of all staff members, volunteers, coaches, students, substitute members of staff and tutors. Any breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal, to a member of the Safeguarding Team, to a member

of the Leadership Team (Dr A Cassidy, Mrs A Duffin or Mrs M McCann) , or to a member of the Board of Governors. The matter will then be dealt with according to the school's Safeguarding Procedures and/or the school's Disciplinary Procedures.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every year or sooner if required.

Signed: Dr A Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr G Murdock (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024

Appendix A
Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff



