



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY-RESPECT

Code of Conduct for Adults

Reviewed in	October 2026
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Reviewed by	Grace Speakman
Ratified by	Kate Collins

Overview

Safe Start School is committed to providing a safe, supportive, stimulating and trauma-responsive learning environment. Adults are expected to model the school's WISER values and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, safeguarding and respectful relationships.

This Code forms part of the school's safeguarding arrangements. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Managing Allegations/Low-Level Concerns procedures, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety/Acceptable Use requirements, Data Protection Policy and other relevant school procedures.

1. Purpose and scope

This Code sets out the standards of conduct expected of all adults working for, with or on behalf of Safe Start School. It applies to employees, agency and supply staff, contractors, consultants, trainees, apprentices, volunteers and any other adult working with or providing services to students.

For this Code, "student", "pupil", "child" and "young person" mean a person receiving education or services from the school. Where a student is aged 18 or over, adults must continue to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and follow safeguarding arrangements relevant to that young person.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Adults must act in the best interests of children, maintain a child-centred approach, act immediately on concerns and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. All staff must read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 in full.

This Code is informed by KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, current statutory information-sharing guidance, the Prevent duty and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for professionals working in education settings.

2. Expected professional standards

- Place students' safety, welfare, dignity and learning at the centre of professional practice.
- Treat students fairly, respectfully and without discrimination, harassment, humiliation or favouritism.
- Maintain high expectations while recognising individual SEND, communication, developmental, cultural and trauma-related needs.
- Model calm, respectful, honest and professional behaviour, including during challenging or dysregulated situations.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid conduct that could reasonably be misinterpreted.
- Work constructively with colleagues, parents/carers and external professionals while maintaining confidentiality.
- Follow lawful and reasonable instructions, school policies, risk assessments, safeguarding plans and agreed support strategies.
- Undertake required training and raise concerns where practice, resources or arrangements may place a child or adult at risk.
- For teachers, uphold the Teachers' Standards, including Part Two on personal and professional conduct.

A serious or repeated breach of this Code may result in action under the school's disciplinary procedures and, where appropriate, referral to safeguarding agencies, the Disclosure and Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Agency or police.

3. Safeguarding concerns, allegations and low-level concerns

Adults must report safeguarding concerns about a child immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL and record them in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of immediate harm, emergency services and/or children's social care should be contacted as appropriate.

Any concern about the conduct of an adult working with children must be reported, regardless of how small it may appear. This includes allegations that may meet the harm threshold and low-level concerns that are inconsistent with this Code or expected professional conduct, even where they do not appear sufficiently serious to meet the harm threshold.

- Concerns about a member of staff, supply staff member, volunteer or contractor must be reported in accordance with the school's Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns procedure.
- Concerns about the Headteacher must be reported to the Proprietor/appropriate nominated person in accordance with the safeguarding policy.
- Adults should self-refer where they have behaved in a way that could be misinterpreted, have accidentally breached professional boundaries, or find themselves in a situation that may give rise to concern.
- Adults must not investigate safeguarding allegations or low-level concerns themselves.

4. Confidentiality, information sharing and records

Adults may have access to confidential and personal information about students, families, colleagues and the school. Information must be accessed, used, stored and shared only for legitimate professional purposes and in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and school policy.

Data protection law does not prevent necessary and proportionate information sharing to safeguard a child. Adults must not promise confidentiality to a child where information may need to be shared for safeguarding purposes.

- Use approved school systems and devices for confidential information unless specifically authorised otherwise.
- Do not discuss confidential information where it may be overheard or disclose it to people who do not need to know.
- Keep safeguarding records factual, timely, clear and accurate, including actions, decisions, rationale and outcomes where required.
- Do not use information obtained through work for personal benefit or to embarrass, intimidate or disadvantage another person.
- Refer media and legal enquiries to senior management.

5. Propriety, behaviour and appearance

Adults must maintain conduct, both in and outside work, that does not undermine their suitability to work with children, compromise safeguarding, damage professional relationships or bring the school into disrepute.

Adults must notify the school promptly of relevant arrests, charges, cautions, convictions, safeguarding allegations, disqualification matters or other circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, in accordance with school procedures and any contractual requirements.

- Do not use sexualised, discriminatory, degrading, intimidating, threatening or humiliating language or behaviour.
- Do not discuss inappropriate details of personal, sexual or intimate relationships with students.
- Dress and appearance must be safe, clean and appropriate to the role and school environment, taking account of professional, cultural and health and safety considerations.
- Do not bring onto school premises or systems material that is illegal, sexually explicit, extremist or otherwise incompatible with safeguarding and professional standards, except where specifically authorised for a legitimate professional purpose.

6. Sexual conduct, abuse of trust and professional boundaries

The relationship between an adult working in education and a student is not one of equals. Adults hold a position of trust and must never use their role, status or influence for personal, sexual, financial or emotional advantage.

Adults must never engage in sexual activity with a child, sexualise a professional relationship, make sexual remarks to or about a student, exchange sexual or suggestive communications, request or share sexual images, or engage in grooming behaviour. A student's apparent consent does not remove the adult's professional or legal responsibilities.

Adults must maintain boundaries with all students, including students aged 18 or over who remain enrolled at the school. Any developing relationship, attachment, dependency, infatuation or boundary concern must be reported promptly to senior leadership/DSL.

7. Infatuations, attachments and dependency

A student may develop an infatuation, attachment or dependency towards an adult. Adults must not encourage or exploit this. Any indication that this may be developing must be reported promptly so that appropriate protective arrangements can be agreed.

Adults must also report concerns where they believe their own actions may have been misunderstood or where they are concerned about another adult's relationship or boundaries with a student.

8. Gifts, rewards, favouritism and financial boundaries

Small, occasional tokens of appreciation from students or families may be accepted where reasonable and consistent with school expectations. Adults must not accept gifts, money, loans or benefits that could create an obligation, conflict of interest or appearance of preferential treatment.

Personal gifts to individual students or families should not normally be given. Rewards must follow the school's agreed reward arrangements and must not create favouritism, exclusivity or dependency. Any exceptional arrangement should be transparent and approved by a senior leader.

9. Social contact, communication and social media

Communication with students must take place through approved professional channels and remain transparent, necessary and appropriate to the adult's role.

- Do not give students personal telephone numbers, personal email addresses, private social-media details or other personal contact information unless specifically authorised for an exceptional professional reason.
- Do not add, follow, message or communicate privately with current students through personal social-media, messaging, gaming or other online accounts.
- Do not use disappearing-message functions or secret/private channels for professional communication with students.
- If a student contacts an adult through a personal account, do not continue the conversation; preserve/report relevant information and inform a manager/DSL as appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate privacy settings, while recognising that online material may become public.
- Online activity must not compromise safeguarding, confidentiality, professional reputation or suitability to work with children.
- Any pre-existing family, friendship or community relationship with a student or parent/carer that could create a boundary issue should be declared to senior management.

10. Physical contact, comfort, privacy and personal care

Appropriate physical contact may sometimes be necessary to support, guide, reassure or protect a student. It must be in response to the student's needs, proportionate, of limited duration and appropriate to the circumstances, age, development, communication, SEND, culture and any agreed care or support plan.

- Physical contact must never be secretive, sexual, casual for the adult's gratification, punitive or an abuse of authority.
- Where feasible, explain the contact and seek the student's agreement. Remain alert to verbal and non-verbal indications of discomfort.
- Where comfort is offered to a distressed student, maintain professional boundaries and consider informing a colleague where the contact could be open to misinterpretation.
- Personal or intimate care must only be undertaken by appropriately trained/authorised staff in accordance with the student's care plan and school procedures.
- Respect privacy when students change clothing or undertake personal care. Supervision must be necessary, proportionate and sensitive.

11. Behaviour management and physical intervention

Students must be treated with dignity. Sarcasm, degrading treatment, deliberate humiliation, aggressive intimidation and the use of force as punishment are prohibited.

Staff must follow the Behaviour Policy, individual plans and the school's physical intervention procedures. De-escalation and preventative strategies should be used wherever practicable. Physical intervention must only be used where lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

All relevant incidents must be recorded and reported in accordance with school procedures. At Safe Start, staff required to use physical intervention must follow the school's approved CPI training and guidance.

12. First aid, medication and health needs

Only staff who are trained, competent and authorised should administer medication or undertake clinical/first-aid procedures beyond ordinary emergency assistance. Staff must follow the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions/First Aid/Medication procedures and individual healthcare plans.

Adults must store their own medication securely and seek appropriate advice where medication or a health condition may affect their ability to carry out their role safely.

13. One-to-one working and meetings

One-to-one work is sometimes necessary and appropriate. Adults should plan it to reduce avoidable risk to the student and themselves. Where practicable, use rooms/areas that are observable or interruptible and ensure colleagues know where the session is taking place.

Professional judgement and individual risk assessment should be used rather than a blanket requirement to keep doors open, particularly where confidentiality, sensory needs or the student's dignity require a different arrangement.

Meetings with students away from school premises or outside normal arrangements require prior authorisation and appropriate risk assessment. Adults must not invite students to their home or undertake private arrangements for personal benefit.

14. Transporting students

Transport must be authorised and appropriately planned. Drivers must hold the correct licence, insurance (including business use where required), and use a roadworthy vehicle. Seat belts and any legally required child restraints must be used.

Adults should not offer unauthorised lifts. In an emergency, where transporting a student is necessary to prevent risk, the circumstances must be reported and recorded as soon as practicable.

15. Educational visits, clubs and residential activity

The same professional standards and safeguarding boundaries apply during educational visits, residential activities, work experience, clubs and other off-site activities. Less formal environments do not reduce the adult's position of trust. Adults must follow the relevant visit risk assessment, staffing arrangements and Educational Visits Policy.

16. Curriculum and sensitive discussions

Sensitive, controversial, political, religious or sexual content must be handled in an age-appropriate, impartial and educationally relevant way. Adults must not use their role to promote partisan political views, impose personal beliefs, or encourage inappropriate sexual

or extremist discussion.

Unexpected disclosures or safeguarding concerns arising during lessons must be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

17. Photography, video and recordings

Images, video and audio recordings of students are personal data and must only be created, stored, used or shared for an authorised school purpose and in accordance with the school's privacy information, data protection arrangements and relevant consent/other lawful basis requirements.

- Use only school-provided or specifically authorised equipment/accounts.
- Do not use personal phones, cameras or personal cloud/social-media accounts to photograph or record students.
- Do not take images in circumstances that compromise dignity or privacy, including changing, intimate care or states of undress.
- Store and share recordings securely and only with authorised people.
- Respect a student's wishes where appropriate and consider safeguarding, SEND and communication needs.
- Delete recordings when no longer required in accordance with school retention arrangements.

18. Personal devices, ICT, online safety and AI

Adults must use school ICT, internet access, communication systems and devices responsibly, lawfully and in accordance with the Acceptable Use/Online Safety requirements. School systems may be monitored where lawful and proportionate for safeguarding, security, compliance and investigation purposes; staff should be informed of relevant monitoring through school policies and privacy information.

- Personal phones and smart devices must not be used to photograph, video or audio-record students or confidential school information.
- Do not access, create, transmit, download or store illegal, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, extremist or otherwise prohibited material, except where specifically authorised as part of a legitimate investigation and handled under safeguarding procedures.
- If child sexual abuse material or suspected illegal imagery is encountered, do not copy, forward, print or unnecessarily view it. Secure the device/system and report immediately to the DSL/Headteacher in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Do not input identifiable, confidential, safeguarding or special-category personal data into public or unapproved generative AI services. Use AI only where authorised and in accordance with school data protection, safeguarding, copyright and acceptable-use requirements.
- Passwords, authentication details and access credentials must not be shared.

19. Monitoring, surveillance and privacy

The school may operate filtering, monitoring, security-camera/video-audio surveillance and other security systems in accordance with its policies, privacy information and data protection obligations. Staff acknowledgement of this Code is not treated as consent to monitoring. Monitoring must have an appropriate lawful basis and be necessary and proportionate.

Adults must not attempt to disable, evade or interfere with authorised safeguarding, filtering, monitoring or security controls.

20. Whistleblowing

Adults must raise concerns about unsafe, unlawful or inappropriate safeguarding practice. Concerns should normally be raised through the school's Whistleblowing Policy or safeguarding procedures. No adult should suffer retaliation or detrimental treatment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern or making a protected disclosure. Concerns raised maliciously or knowingly falsely may be addressed under the school's disciplinary procedures.

Where an adult feels unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally, external whistleblowing routes may be available, including the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

21. Breaches, reporting and recording

Adults must report conduct that may place a child at risk, breach professional boundaries or be inconsistent with this Code. This includes conduct that appears minor but could constitute a low-level concern.

- Record safeguarding concerns promptly, accurately and factually using the school's approved system.
- Do not confront an adult who is the subject of an allegation or attempt to investigate the matter yourself.
- Preserve relevant evidence and follow instructions from the DSL/Headteacher or investigating authority.
- Failure to report a safeguarding concern, deliberate concealment, retaliation against a person raising a concern, or knowingly making a malicious allegation may result in disciplinary action.

22. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring implementation of this Code, with oversight from the Proprietor/Governing Body as appropriate. The Code will normally be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding learning or school arrangements change.

All adults are expected to read, understand and comply with this Code. The school may require written or electronic acknowledgement as part of induction and annual safeguarding updates.