

# Mexborough Highwoods Primary School

## Policy Code of Conduct



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# Mexborough Highwoods Primary School

## Code of Conduct for Employees

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The public, parents and children are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct outlines existing laws, regulations and conditions of service, and provides further guidance to assist Mexborough Highwoods Primary School and its employees in their day-to-day work. It is aimed at ensuring that employees are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them by Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.
- 1.3 Failure to observe the standards set out in this code will be regarded as serious and any breach will render an employee liable to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.
- 1.4 The code applies to all employees, students and volunteers of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.
- 1.5 A number of these additional sources of guidance are listed in the Appendix at the end of this code. This list is not, however, exhaustive and employees should ensure that they familiarise themselves with any relevant guidance which may be provided in respect of their particular area of work.

### 2. Standards

- 2.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the children. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management within the School any significant deficiency in the provision of service.
- 2.2 It is the duty of each employee to report any impropriety or breach of procedure. The appropriate procedure is outlined in Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's Whistleblowing Procedure.

### 3. Disclosure of Information

- 3.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School believes that openness is best. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to auditors, government departments, stakeholders and the public. Mexborough Highwoods Primary School is entitled by law to keep certain information confidential. Mexborough Highwoods Primary School may still decide in some circumstances to make such information open to the public. It is important for employees to be

aware of which information Mexborough Highwoods Primary School properly and lawfully considers confidential, and to act accordingly.

- 3.2 Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any information received by an employee in the course of his/her employment should only be used for the purpose for which it was given or collected and should not be divulged unless the circumstances for disclosure have been specified in advance or where disclosure is required or sanctioned by law.
- 3.3 Any particular information received by an employee from a Governor which is personal to that Governor and does not belong to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School should not be divulged by the employee without the prior approval of that Governor, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.
- 3.4 All employees must comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The Data Protection Act 1984 controls the disclosure of personal information held on computer or recorded in a form that can be processed automatically. The Data Protection Act 1998 will extend these duties.

## **4. Professional Behaviour & Conduct**

### **4.1 *Treating other people with dignity and respect***

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect. Staff are required to comply with the school's equality policies in respect of colleagues, pupils and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in schools. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

### **4.2 *Appropriate relationships with children***

Mexborough Highwoods Primary School employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves. Staff are required to read and understand the School policies on child protection.

### **4.3 *Professional behaviour***

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action and where relevant, referral to the Teaching Agency.

#### **4.4 Criminal actions**

Mexborough Highwoods Primary School employees must inform the Head teacher immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Head teacher will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the School.

#### **4.5 Probity of records and other documents**

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence. Where an employee who has claimed any benefit, including housing benefit, either directly or indirectly and has failed to disclose their full earnings, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the Police.

### **5. Relationships**

#### **5.1 Governors**

Employees are responsible to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School through its senior managers and Governors. Employees should aim to develop a relationship with Governors based on mutual respect and support. Employees need to understand the limitations to personal friendship with Governors and should avoid any actions which could be perceived as being designed to achieve personal as opposed to the School's objectives.

#### **5.2 The Local Community**

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the School.

#### **5.3 Contractors**

All relationships of a business or private nature with contractors or potential contractors to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, should be made known to the Head teacher. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

5.4 Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the Head Teacher.

## **6. Appointments and Other Employment Matters**

- 6.1 Employees involved in recruitment should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.
- 6.2 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner, or any other individual where there may be a conflict of interest.

## **7. Outside Commitments**

- 7.1 All employees have contractual obligations and should not take outside employment, which conflicts with Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's interest.
- 7.2 All employees are required to obtain consent of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, via the Head Teacher, to take outside employment.
- 7.3 No outside work of any sort, whether paid or unpaid, should be undertaken during working time.
- 7.4 Employees should be aware of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's position on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment. "Intellectual property" includes inventions, designs and computer software. Where it is developed in the course of an employee's duties it is the property of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.

## **8. Personal Interests**

- 8.1 Employees must declare to the Head Teacher any non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's interests, for example, if you are involved in an official capacity with an outside organisation which has dealings with Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, e.g. grant requests.
- 8.2 Employees must declare to the Head Teacher any financial interests which could conflict with Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's interests, e.g. work for which a fee is received.
- 8.3 Employees should declare to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, via the Head Teacher, membership of any secret societies. The definition of "secret society" is as follows:

"Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting which:  
- is not open to members of the public who are not members

and,

- includes in the granting of membership a requirement of the member to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance

and,

- includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy in regard to rules, membership or conduct.”

- 8.4 Where employees have declared an interest, the detail will be kept confidential under the authority of the Head Teacher.

## **9. Equality Issues**

- 9.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School is an equal opportunities employer and all employees are under an obligation to ensure that its policies relating to equality issues plus those required by law, are complied with.
- 9.2 All members of the local community, children, parents and other employees have a right to be treated with courtesy, fairness and equity.
- 9.3 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School’s objective is to promote equality of opportunity and prevent unlawful discrimination. Its commitment to equal opportunities is set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy and Practice Document.

## **10. Separation of Roles during Tendering**

- 10.1 Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within Mexborough Highwoods Primary School. Senior employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.
- 10.2 Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.
- 10.3 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 10.4 Employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

## **11. Corruption**

- 11.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School will not condone corruption/fraud and its expectation on propriety and accountability is that employees at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to rules, procedures and recommended practices.
- 11.2 It is a serious criminal offence for employees corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. If such a gift or reward is received by an employee it will be for the employee to demonstrate that any such item has not been corruptly obtained.

## **12. Use of Financial Resources**

- 12.1 Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.
- 12.2 All employees must comply with the School's Financial Regulations. Employees should familiarise themselves with the regulations

## **13. Gifts & Hospitality**

- 13.1 Where a business contact offers a personal gift, personal payment or other incentive such as secondary employment to an employee, these should not be accepted and should be returned with a suitable official letter. Such offers should be declared to the Governing Body and recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
- 13.2 If it is not possible to return gifts then the employee who deals with that supplier should declare the gift to the Head teacher who will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the School and should be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. The only exceptions to these are:
- Low cost, functional items suitable for business use rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo e.g. diaries, calendars and pens. These items may be accepted and do not have to be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
  - Gifts offered by parents or students to school staff to express their thanks, such as boxes of chocolates, however, only gifts with an individual value of £25 or less may be accepted. Such gifts do not have to be declared in writing to the Governing Body or be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. For the avoidance of doubt employees must always refuse gifts of money.
- 13.3 Where hospitality in the form of meals and drinks is offered by a business contact, this is only acceptable where it forms part of a normal business meeting (for example, refreshments at training events or meals at evening meetings).

Offers of hospitality to specific events, such as a dinner or sporting event, should only be accepted after authorisation from the Governing Body. These would normally only be approved where there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the school and the hospitality would not expose the school to criticism that the business contact was exerting undue influence. These should be recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Visits by employees to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business and authorised by the school, shall be at the school's expense.

#### **13.4 Gifts or Hospitality to the School**

Where a business contact sends a gift to the school (for example, a stationery supplier sending a gift), these should not be accepted and should be returned to the supplier. Such offers should be declared to the Governing Body and recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. If it is not possible to return the gift, the employee who usually deals with the supplier should declare the gift to the Governing Body who will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the school and should be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

The only exceptions to this are low cost, functional items suitable for business use (as opposed to personal use), such as diaries, calendars or pens, may be accepted and do not have to be declared on the Register of Business Interests.

### **14. Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving**

- 14.1 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Mexborough Highwoods Primary School activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic rules and conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- 14.2 Where Mexborough Highwoods Primary School wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the appropriate Chief Officer/Director of any such interest. Similarly, where Mexborough Highwoods Primary School through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

### **15. Contact with the Press and Media**

- 15.1 Unless specifically nominated and authorised by the Head Teacher employees are not permitted to give reports or speak to the press and media on matters relating to employment with Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, the School business or decisions of the School. Employees with this responsibility should guard themselves against declaring a view which is contrary to a position taken by Mexborough Highwoods Primary School and which may be deemed to be critical of that decision.
- 15.3 In the event of an industrial dispute involving your Trade Union organisation, an elected representative of that Trade Union may be called upon by the press or media to comment on the dispute. Where a decision is taken by that Trade Union organisation to respond, the employee should exercise great care in presenting the facts of the case and should avoid personal opinions which may be damaging to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School.
- 15.4 In all circumstances, employees are under a general duty of care to avoid, wherever practicable, a conflict of interest's situation arising and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the best interests of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School. Should this occur, then the employee will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the agreed procedures.

## **16 Smoking**

- 16.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School has a policy on smoking at work. Employees are reminded that if found smoking in contravention of the policy, it will be regarded as a disciplinary offence.
- 16.2 As with all DMBC buildings Staff and volunteers must not smoke within the grounds or on the pavements outside the grounds. Persons wishing to smoke must walk beyond the perimeter of the school to do so.

## **17 Health and Safety**

- 17.1 Employees must adhere to Mexborough Highwoods Primary School's Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well. This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and School guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and the local authority

## **18 Use of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

- 18.1 The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the School has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the schools and public confidence.

## **19 Use of School Premises, Equipment & Communication Systems**

- 19.1 Mexborough Highwoods Primary School equipment and systems (phone, email and computers) are available only for school-related activities and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use. This is unless authorised by the Head teacher (NB for the Head teacher this is the Chair of Governors); in case of an emergency, or where used for brief periods outside of working hours. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery and premises. It also applies to access provided for remote use (e.g. hand held portable devices etc.) and to staff working outside of school premises and using their own IT equipment. Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal. This list is not exhaustive and includes;
- Creating, sending or forwarding any message that would reasonably be considered inappropriate or unacceptable.
  - committing or implying commitment to any contractual arrangements.
  - accessing, publication or circulation of illegal, offensive, unacceptable inappropriate or non-work related material.
  - any illegal activities.
  - posting confidential information about the school and/or other employees, children or parents.
  - gambling or gaming.
  - unauthorised use of school facilities (or employee's personal IT equipment), for personal use during employee's working time .
- 19.2 Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material or who are unsure about whether something h/she proposes to do might breach this policy should seek advice from their Head teacher. The School has the right to monitor e-mails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity.
- Accredited Trade Union representatives can use School's communication systems for the purposes of undertaking trade union duties and these will be treated as confidential.
- 19.3 Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential. Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action. Where appropriate the School should consider a system of proxy access. Any equipment of the School that is used outside the premises, for example laptops, should be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the Head teacher.

<b>20</b>	<b>Social Networking Websites</b>
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20.1 School employees must not access social networking websites for personal use (i.e. non- job related use) during work time. Access to some journals, blogs and social networking sites is permitted during work time for the purposes of undertaking job related duties only. Mexborough Highwoods Primary School employees must act in the best interests of the School and not disclose personal data or information about any individual including staff, young people or children. This includes images. Access may be withdrawn and disciplinary action taken if there is a breach of confidentiality or defamatory remarks are made about the School, staff, young people or children.

20.2 The School respects an employee's private life. However, it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. Employees using social networking websites in their private life;

- must refrain from identifying themselves as working for the school, in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the School into disrepute.
- must not identify other School employees, children or young people without their consent.
- must not make any defamatory remarks about the School, its employees, children or young people, or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the School.
- must not disclose personal data or information about the School, employees, children or young people that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998, for example, posting photographs or images of children or young people.
- must not post any comments, photographs, images or conversations on social networking sites which may bring the school into disrepute
- must not allow pupils to access their personal social networking accounts and where they are contacted by a pupil they should bring it to the Head teacher's attention.

<b>21</b>	<b>Confidentiality</b>
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21.1 All employees at the School and the Governing Body come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to read and to observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

**21.2**     ***Managing Data***

Under the Data Protection Act, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

**21.2**     ***Disclosing Data***

Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the local authority to other parties, for example, parents or colleagues. There are particular exceptions to this; for example disclosure of suspected or alleged abuse of a pupil to Child Protection officers; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the Whistleblowing Procedure. All communication with the media must be directed through the Head teacher or their nominee.

- 21.3 There are circumstances in which staff are obliged to release pupil data, for example, parents seeking information about pupil progress or other colleagues in the School. Staff should be aware that, from time to time, information about employees' salaries is matched with other public sector information (for example housing benefits) in order to prevent fraudulent claims

## **22 PERSONAL**

### **22.1 Identity Cards**

There is a general presumption that all staff and visitors issued with photo identity cards wear them at all times including in the school and when they represent the school (e.g. School visits, training).

### **22.2 Telephones**

Employees, Volunteers and Students must only make personal calls and emails when necessary and within reason. Mobile telephones must be switched off during working hours. It is not expected that calls will be taken, mobile phones checked for messages or text messages sent during the working day. In an emergency the school phone number should be given. Mobile phones may be during break and lunchtimes but please take into account those around you and demonstrate consideration and courtesy.

### **22.3 Chewing Gum**

Employees, Volunteers and Students should refrain from chewing gum or eating sweets during working hours.

### **22.4 Tattoos / Piercings**

Employees, Volunteers and Students should ensure that all tattoos are covered at all times.

Earrings may be worn but Employees, Volunteers and Students with other body piercings should remove these during the working day. Jewellery should be discreet and visible piercings restricted to ears. Single nose studs may be worn for religious or cultural reasons only.

### **22.5 Dress Code**

At Highwoods Primary School we aim to foster a feeling of professionalism and pride within our school. We believe that appearances are one of the first characteristics that people are measured by and therefore, consider that smart clothing is paramount for the first impressions to be of trust, respect and

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professionalism. We believe that staff are role models for pupils and should therefore dress accordingly. We believe that staff should be encouraged to dress appropriately for the activities they are undertaking, including, PE or Outdoor Learning

Staff are the most important role models in the school. The Governors recognise the rights of staff to choose what they wear and how they appear.

However, as role models they need to set an example to the pupils. The governors of the school do not expect the staff to wear a uniform but do expect the staff to be smartly and appropriately dressed and well presented in school. The choice of dress should uphold the school's high expectations for the children.

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that members of staff are aware of the dress code. All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with its contents and complying with it.

#### *General Staff Dress And Conduct*

Hair should be neat and tidy with no extreme hairstyling.

All staff are expected to be well groomed and maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.

Staff are seen as a role model and, as such, should always give careful consideration to how they dress and act. Staff must ensure they are dressed safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

All staff should be mindful that their dress sets an example to pupils. If staff dress smartly, pupils are more likely to follow suit. Staff should therefore exercise professional judgement, thinking about the 'Professional Conduct' aspect of the Teachers Standards, when deciding what to wear during the course of a normal school day. Male staff should wear a collared shirt (not a polo shirt). No jeans, denim, jeggings, or sportswear or leggings (unless worn with a nearly knee length skirt or dress) should be worn during the normal school day. For health & safety reasons, staff should also not wear flip-flops.

Whilst it is not possible to list every possible clothing option here, it is hoped that staff will support the safer code of professional conduct and will dress in a way that reflects the high esteem in which we are held by children and their families.

#### *Teaching PE, Games And Sporting Clubs*

Staff should wear PE clothes and trainers when teaching PE and Games lessons. To be consistent with the expectations for the children, staff may

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wear PE clothes to school if the corresponding activity takes place during the morning sessions, but must change into regular staff dress at lunchtime.

When teaching PE/Games in the afternoon, or if there is a sporting club after school, teaching staff should wear normal staff dress in the morning and change into PE clothes at lunchtime.

Teaching assistants attending to support the learning of pupils in a PE or Games lesson should at a minimum have a change of appropriate shoes.

#### *PPA, Non-Contact Time, Attending Courses/Meetings*

Whenever in school but not teaching e.g. undertaking PPA or leadership/management responsibilities, staff should maintain a high standard of professional dress.

When attending professional development courses or meetings outside school staff should maintain a high standard of professional dress. There may be exceptions e.g. courses for PE, Art, Forest Schools etc. where specific clothing is specified.

When staff are present at an evening workshop or information evening for parents they should maintain a high standard of professional dress. If staff have been teaching sporting activities during the school day or for an after-school club, they should change into something more professional.

#### *School Visits And Residential Visits*

When on a school trip or residential visit, the attire of staff should mirror that of the children. For example, if pupils are wearing school uniform then staff should wear their regular school clothes. If children have been asked to wear specific clothing or dress down, then staff should follow suit, ensuring their choice of clothing is deemed safe and appropriate.

#### *Dressing Up / Theme Days*

Staff are not obliged to dress up for particular school events or themed days but are encouraged to enter into the spirit of the occasion.



# Policy

## Staff Code of Conduct

Name:
I have read and agree to follow the terms set out in the Staff Code of Conduct
Signed:
Date: