



## CVSE Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Authors	Kate Lunn
Policy Lead	Kate Lunn
Date Ratified by management team	Oct. 2018
Status	Ratified
Last Review Date	September 2020
Policy Number	CVSE doc 33

## **Calder Valley Steiner Education Staff code of conduct.**

**The staff code of conduct aims to give all staff and trustees strict guidelines in which to work for the benefit of other staff and the children at the Kindergarten and Parent and Child.**

### **Definition**

#### **What is a code of conduct?**

The code of conduct for a group or organization is an agreement on rules of behaviour for the members of that group or organization. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

### **Purpose, scope and principles**

This code of conduct applies to **all** staff employed by CVSE, including supply staff, all volunteers, and all staff representing the school whilst out on duties which are out of sight (e.g. trips) and all trustees, the code must be adhered to.

Calder Valley Steiner Education (CVSE) can only provide children with an outstanding Waldorf education through the behaviour of its staff, volunteers and trustees, whether this behaviour is with children, colleagues or external agencies.

At CVSE we want our children to be themselves, to follow their own path and act with integrity, we also want our colleagues to do the same. This is central to any Waldorf setting. As such, the work that teachers and other employees carry out must be done out of freedom and trust. Our actions must not only be derived from obligation but also as free acts born from personal integrity and a commitment to the children.

Neither Organisation nor culture can function without some basic agreed principles in place, this document aims to set out employees' legal obligations, together with some agreed minimum standards.

It is hoped that new staff will find this useful and it will also serve to remind existing staff of minimum standards.

CVSE staff are role models and are therefore in a unique position of influence in terms of setting a good example to all children within the setting. As a member of our community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of CVSE. In some circumstances, this applies outside working hours and outside the premises.

### **Management and Leadership**

Calder Valley Steiner Education has a strong Waldorf ethos.

Staff should aim to work out of principles of anthroposophy and central to this ethos is working collaboratively, Staff are expected to foster trust and professional working relationships by working collaboratively with each other.

CVSE does have a strong management and leadership structure and all staff need to adhere to the structure and decision making process.

This includes active attendance at and participation in meetings and, where full responsibility teachers are concerned, curriculum development and relevant mandate work.

Where decisions do not fall within the remit of the designated person, issues will need to be debated in an appropriate forum. Staff need to and should be able to express their positive and negative views during the decision-making process. However, no community can function and develop without its members making some personal sacrifices for the greater good of the school.

It is important that wherever possible, we all use the right channels of communication, both to challenge each other and support each other. Staff are expected to uphold CVSE policies and procedures, and raise any concerns in a responsible and appropriate way.

Telling parents or colleagues that you do not support a CVSE policy/decision and / or actively not adhering to agreed policies/decisions are both instances of actions which are unacceptable in that they may undermine colleagues or even bring CVSE into disrepute.

There may be times when other commitments prevent us from supporting each other, but by and large staff are expected to support each other wherever possible by being flexible, covering colleagues' lessons/duties when they are off sick and taking on occasional additional work.

Where there are disagreements or difficult relationships between people at work, staff are expected to talk to each other informally and professionally to try to resolve the differences, using a colleague as mediator if appropriate. Members of staff should not discuss issues with other members of staff prior to talking to the individual involved. Whilst this is not always possible (e.g. where serious allegations are made or in instances of bullying), it is anticipated that the complaints procedure and staff grievance procedure will be used once informal steps have failed to help matters. If you feel unable to resolve any personal and or professional issues please speak directly to the Early Years Manager or Deputy.

If you are struggling personally (which may be affecting your work or not) please speak to the Lead for Personnel directly, staff should not have discussions during their working hours.

### **Setting an example**

CVSE staff and volunteers set examples of behaviour which can be copied by children. Imitation features heavily within Waldorf education. All staff are therefore expected to use appropriate language and behaviour which they would want to be imitated.

All staff must arrive on time on a morning and are expected to be present until all children have left the premises at the very least.

Time keeping is an essential part of safeguarding the welfare of the children.

### **Conduct outside work**

CVSE is proud of its heritage, ethos and standing in the community, we take pride in our reputation and expect staff to avoid any actions that may damage the reputation of CVSE, employees' own reputations or the reputation of other members of the community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and acts of gross misconduct.

Staff should exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of CVSE privacy policy and data protection policy, being able to identify the risks to themselves and others. Inappropriate use of social network sites may bring staff, CVSE into disrepute.

We have a very clear policy on social media which bars all employees from being 'friends' on social media with any current or past pupils or any current parents. We would treat any deviation from this policy as gross misconduct

Staff may undertake work outside CVSE, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of CVSE nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

### **Safeguarding pupils/students**

All Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from all and any kinds of abuse.

This duty includes reporting concerns about a pupil/student to the CVSE Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) only, as stated in the Safeguarding policy. The named person with this responsibility for CVSE is Kate Lunn and she is on call 24 hours. Staff are obliged to read the school's Child Protection Policy, (new staff will be provided with a copy of the CVSE policy) and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents. Staff are expected to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils under their supervision. If a staff member is concerned that a correct safeguarding procedure is not followed then they have a duty to inform the DSL directly. Issues **should not** be discussed with another member of staff instead of or before the DSL.

It is essential that the environment helps the pupil feel safe and that the potential for allegations is minimised.

### **Confidentiality**

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. All issues discussed at college meetings are confidential and should not be discussed with those who are not members of college.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policy/procedure. Care should be taken to use the

right channels when discussing such cases. Safeguarding investigations should be carried out by one person and staff should only discuss these issues with pupils with permission from the Designated Person or Investigator.

Staff have an obligation to share with the CVSE DSL, any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

### **Pupil development**

Staff must comply with CVSE policies and procedures and collaborate with colleagues and external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils. Staff are expected to follow reasonable instructions or requests that ultimately support the development of pupils.

### **Dignity, diversity and inclusion**

As a Waldorf setting, we strive to establish a strong community with strong moral values among our staff and pupils. Respect for people from all walks of life is therefore essential, regardless of their age, race, sexuality, gender, marital status, religion, beliefs or transgender status. We also aim to help pupils to understand that we live in a multi-cultural society.

Staff must support and comply with policies relating to equal opportunity, British values, inclusion, and access and bullying, and must help create a fair and inclusive environment.

### **Honesty and integrity**

At CVSE we aim to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities. All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree, accept or receive a bribe from another person.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the CVSE Whistleblowing Policy. Gifts from suppliers or associates of CVSE must be declared to Kate Lunn, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from pupil or parents.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are likely to be seen as inappropriate and could be misinterpreted by the student or student's parents – especially where gifts are repeated or generous.

### **Substance abuse, medication on site and prescriptive medication**

Staff must understand that whilst caring for the children at the Kindergarten or Parent & Child that they must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substances, this would be gross misconduct.

If a member of staff is on a prescriptive medication each member of staff must ask the GP or person dispensing the medication, to ensure that this medication does not impair their ability to look after the children.

If this is the case, you must inform Kate Lunn. Failure to do so is considered gross negligence

Staff must ensure that any medication bought into school must be securely locked away from the reach of children, in a locked cupboard, they must not be in bags that could be accessed by children.

### **Touch, behaviour and Physical Contact with Pupils**

CVSE staff recognise the value that appropriate touch has for the children in our care and we will provide physical comfort or consolation to a child who expresses a need for such.

Staff will not touch a child in a potentially sexually sensitive area unless the child has incurred injury that necessitates immediate medical attention and contact in that way. In such circumstances, we will, as adults, make every effort to ensure that another adult as witness is present in order to protect ourselves and the child.

Staff will not touch a child who in any way expresses that they do not wish to be touched, unless in the extreme case of needing to restrain a child who is in danger to themselves or others.

#### **If staff need to hold/restrain a child, they should always ask themselves?**

- Is a less intrusive intervention preferable?
- Do we have to act now?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?

In less urgent situations and if at all possible, the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why.

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with pupils and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to pupils.

There are of course occasions when physical contact is acceptable or necessary. These usually fall into one of four categories:

#### ***1. Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others***

If it is necessary to prevent a pupil causing injury to him/herself to others or to prevent the pupil causing serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances, the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm is acceptable and justifiable. In any such circumstance there would be a written record of the incident and the parents of the young person involved should be informed the same day. Any such incident must always be reported to the DSL School immediately.

**Source – Dept of Education’s publication - Use of Reasonable Force in Schools July 2013**

**What is reasonable force?**

- The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.

• As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, **such** as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

• Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example **when** two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

• Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid **injuring** the pupil.

**2. Comforting a pupil in distress**

In Kindergarten, it is sometimes the case that a teacher will comfort a pupil by sitting them on their knee or putting an arm around them, this should be discouraged. You will need to use your own professional judgement in such circumstances, depending on the age of the child, the extent and cause of the distress and whether any other individuals are present. Consider how others might perceive your action and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in situations which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Generally any physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult and should only be for the minimum duration of time necessary.

**Corporal Punishment**

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful in schools. It is not under any circumstances allowable under the school’s own disciplinary procedures and is actionable in law and applies to any adult who works with children in any setting. This also applies to any form of physical response to misbehaviour, with the exception noted above.

### **Staff should never**

- Use negative contact as a form of punishment, for instance, saying 'No' and tapping the child.
- Never use raised voices or strong words.

### **The use of mobile phones/camera phones/camera tablets/camera laptops/cameras**

The Kindergarten aims to keep all children within its care safe. This includes raising awareness of potential danger through the taking of, and /or distributing of, photographs or moving images.

Mobile phones should be used only as a safety element during the day, members of staff should not be texting, emailing or on social media during their working day.

Any visitors to the setting must also observe the same policy, this includes parents, prospective parents and contractors.

Any staff member who sees a person using a phone inappropriately must immediately ask them to stop and or leave the setting.

### **To clarify, the following rules do apply**

- Staff phones/ camera phones are allowed to be used during break times if the member of staff is not on break duty.
- If a member of staff needs to make a private call they will inform the senior member of staff present and a room will be found to make the call.
- They will not be used at any other time unless an emergency occurs.
- Staff will not use their mobile phones to take pictures.
- The Kindergarten members of staff will always use the camera, never their mobile phone to take photos.

### **First Aid and caring for pupils with particular problems**

Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

Wherever possible, staff who have to help children with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis must therefore be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

In situations where regular physical assistance is necessary it is advisable that parents and staff formally acknowledge this in writing.

### **Discussions with pupils, comments by teachers**

As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

### **Relationships and attitudes**

All staff should understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate relationships between a member of staff and a pupil are now regarded in law as a breach of trust. It is a criminal offence for a teacher or other persons who work with children to breach this trust, punishable on conviction by a fine and/or a term of imprisonment of currently up to 5 years. This legislation includes all children under the age of 18.

All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils, and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

All staff members should maintain a professionally and boundaried relationship with pupil's families at all times.

### **Staff responsibilities**

- Staff should arrive in a timely manner for their shift, any ongoing time keeping issues will be addressed by the teacher or manager.
- Staff should arrive ready to start their shift, any personal issues should be kept until a time can be made for a discussion with a mentor/colleague/personnel. (after the shift)
- Staff should make an appointment to discuss any ongoing personal or medical issues which may affect their abilities to maintain their professional role to the highest standard.
- Any issues should be discussed with an appropriate person as soon as the issue arises.
- Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is unacceptable.
- Staff must follow all specific Risk assessments relating to COVID 19 in addition to the other policies

### **Pastoral Care and situations where conversations of a sensitive nature may be appropriate**

A number of teachers have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

Other staff may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. For example, a pupil may appear distressed and you may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases you must judge whether it is appropriate for you to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to their class teacher

### **Information technology**

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Do not give your home email address or mobile phone number to any pupil. For email, always use your school email address.

### **Reporting incidents**

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with the Designated safe guarding lead. Where it is agreed with a DCPO, the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff has been obliged to restrain a pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult. These should be written on the "all incident report forms.

DSL for CVSE is Kate Lunn. Angie Whitehead is the Kindergarten DSL.

Reminder: All concerns over the well-being of a pupil or concerning any child protection type issue should be addressed in confidence to the *DSL as soon as possible*. It should not be discussed with any other member of staff. Please see the safeguarding policy.

### **Health and safety**

All staff, council members and volunteers are obliged to familiarise themselves with the health and safety policy and adhere to it.

### **Disciplinary action, misconduct and convictions**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct within the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

As with all environments where children or vulnerable adults are present, staff are obliged to notify CVSE without delay if they are convicted of a criminal offence, if proceedings are brought against them or a formal accusation is made of a criminal offence.

It should also be noted that employers have to notify the relevant authority when teachers are dismissed or cease employment for reasons of misconduct or incompetence, or where they resign in circumstances where dismissal was a possibility.

Where employers judge misconduct to involve a risk of harm to children and young people, they are required to refer cases to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Under the provisions of Home Office Circular 45/86, teaching is a 'notifiable' occupation. This means that the police report any conviction or caution of a teacher to the DBS. Offences involving a risk of harm to children, or to vulnerable adults, are considered by the ISA.

Also see employment contract for further information.

### **Related Policies**

- CVSE Staff Absence Policy
- CVSE Acceptable Standards of Behaviour Policy for Teachers and Parents
- CVSE Vision and Ethos
- CVSE Mentoring and Supervision Policy
- CVSE Whistleblowing Policy
- CVSE No Smoking Policy
- CVSE Recruitment and Selection Policy
- CVSE Privacy Policy
- CVSE Data Protection Policy
- CVSE Safeguarding Policy
- CVSE all Covid-19 related policies

Appendix 1.

**Staff Declaration of agreement to the acceptable use policy.**

I will ensure that when I take/or publish images of others I will do so with their permission / permission of parents and in accordance with the schools' policy on the use of digital images. I will not use the personal equipment or record or store these images. Where these images are published (e.g. school website) it will not be possible to identify by name or other personal information, those who are featured.

When I use my mobile phone in school I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using the school equipment.

Signed:

Name:

Designation:

Date: