



**OSALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL
SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT**

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Policy Date:
Review Date:



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of conduct	2
GOOD PRACTICE Guide	6
Responding to allegation made against a school employee	11

CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

It is tempting to believe that if we have child protection procedures, undertake Criminal Record Bureau checks and make our recruitment processes more robust, that children will be safeguarded. Whilst these measures are important, it is the adults surrounding the child that afford the best protection - adults who are professional, display humanity and have a sense of clear boundaries.

It is in no one's interest to engage in defensive practice or to restrict children's experiences in order to avoid an allegation. However, it is in everyone's interest, children, and adults, to despite how the subject of allegations is often portrayed in the press, malicious allegations against school employees are thankfully rare. Likewise, allegations of serious abuse are also rare.

The evidence in York, and wider a field, is that many allegations and concerns, raised by young people, against school employees, can be avoided and often arise due to the employee failing to follow good professional practice.

Ensure that children are safeguarded and, importantly, feel safe. It is also in everyone's interest that adults who work with children also feel safe, without the fear of being the subject of an allegation.

Working with children presents many challenges and can, on occasions, push tolerance to its limits. As human beings, we can feel frustration and anger, especially on those occasions when our own defences are low. However, as professionals, we have a responsibility to develop strategies to respond effectively to these challenges, and mechanisms that allow us to seek help and advice (no matter how experienced we are).

The following guidance is designed to assist. It should not be read as rules, rather as a commonsense guide to working with children.



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

POLICY CONTEXT

This document provides a guide for all adults working at Osaldwick Primary School (including staff, governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and pupils. It refers to and complements other policies and guidance in you school, including:

- School Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- School policy on physical interventions

This policy is based upon the attached DFE document 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings. (Sept 2006), in which you can find useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with a discussion of the issues raised.

All adults working in the school should know the name of the Designated Child Protection Teacher in the school, Helen Humphrys or if unavailable Nicky Bryan-Smith, The Pastoral Support Manager. It is vital that all adults are familiar with the child protection procedures within the school and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. All adults in the school can also expect to be protected from false allegations and accusations.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOURSELF

PRINCIPLES

- The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- Adults working in school are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- Adults working in the school must work and be seen to work with openness and transparency.
- Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Head Teacher or LA about an incident, which could give rise to concern.
- An accurate record should be kept of any such incidents and of decisions made/further action agreed, in accordance with school record keeping policy.



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
- Young people should feel confident in raising concerns but must also recognise the serious nature of allegations against staff. Malicious allegations¹ will have serious consequences.

All staff, volunteers, and regular visitors from external agencies to the school (including cover staff) must:

Be familiar with and work in accordance with the school's policies including in particular:

- Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Physical Intervention
- Internet Safety
- Hygiene
- Health and Safety
- Photo-Images
- Whistleblowing
- **Ask office for copies**

Provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils

- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair, and considered manner. For example, you must ensure that you:
 - Are not sarcastic, and do not make remarks or 'jokes' to pupils of personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature.

¹ A malicious allegation is one that can be proved to be false and where there is evidence that the person making the allegation has been motivated by malice or reward.



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

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- Do not embarrass or humiliate children
- Do not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child. For example,
 - Treat all pupils equally – never build ‘special’ relationships or confer favour on particular pupils
 - Do not give or receive (other than token) gifts unless arranged through school
- Ensure that your relationship with pupils remains on a professional footing. For example, you must:
 - Only touch pupils for professional reasons, and when this is necessary and appropriate for the pupil’s wellbeing or safety (more guidance on this is set out in the DCSF Guidance for Safe Practice referred to above) where ever possible within the presence of others
 - Not behave or dress in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question your conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people’s children
 - Not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with pupils outside your work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems)
 - Not develop ‘personal’ or sexual relationships with pupils. In particular your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which creates a new criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust (when a person aged 18 or over is in a ‘position of trust’ with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or causes or incites that child to engage in or watch sexual activity).

POLICY SUMMARY

IF PUPILS:

- Touch you inappropriately
- Make inappropriate sexual comments/suggestions towards you

Inform the Head Teacher immediately



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

GOOD PRACTICE Guide

PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOURSELF

DO.....

- avoid one to one contact with pupils as far as possible. If it is necessary to have one to one contact, aim to leave the classroom door open or meet in a public space in the school such as the library
- talk to the Head Teacher or Assistant Head if you feel that there is a possibility that you could lose control of your behaviour with particular pupils or classes
- report to your Head Teacher or Assistant Head any situation which you feel could give rise to an allegation by a pupil against you as soon as possible.

DON'T.....

- cover up glass panels in doors with posters etc – it is important that your actions are as transparent as possible
- behave in a way that could be perceived as physically intimidating, humiliating or out of control – this does not mean that you may never raise your voice!
- carry out acts which could be considered to be favouritism e.g. giving birthday cards or gifts outside of the school's official reward systems to particular pupils
- give lifts in your car to pupils on a one to one basis unless you have appropriate insurance, parental permission and line manager agreement to do so
- give out your personal telephone number to pupils, or communicate with them by texts or internet
- make jokes or comments of a sexual or otherwise risqué nature

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE MADE ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

DO.....

- report any allegations of which you become aware to Lesley Barringer



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

DON'T.....

- make judgements about whether the alleged event has actually occurred
- attempt further questioning or investigation - it is David Ellis' and the Local Authority Designated Officer's responsibility to make a decision on next steps

BEHAVIOUR BY STAFF THAT GIVES RISE TO CONCERN

DO.....

- intervene if you see another member of staff acting in a way that could give rise to an allegation of physical or emotional harm
- report any such incident to Lesley Barringer ASAP

DON'T.....

- ignore the behaviour

ENTERING PUPILS TOILETS & ANY AREA USED FOR PE CHANGING

DO.....

- The Class Teacher and Staff carrying out personal care tasks that pupils cannot carry out themselves will need to enter pupils' toilets & changing rooms during the normal course of their duties – if you need to enter for some other reason (e.g. because you believe that a pupil is at physical risk from other pupils), loudly announce your intention before doing so
- enter with another member of staff if possible
- avoid behaviour that could be interpreted as physically intrusive

DON'T.....

- enter pupils' toilets or areas for changing unnecessarily
- assist with any personal care task that a pupil could carry out themselves



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

PHYSICAL THREATS TO MEMBERS OF STAFF

DO.....

- aim to diffuse the situation e.g. calmly acknowledge that the individual is upset and suggest that they leave the room
- call for a fellow staff member if necessary making clear the urgency of the situation)
- report the threat to the Head Teacher as soon as possible

DON'T.....

- risk an escalation of the situation by shouting back

FIGHTS BETWEEN PUPILS

DO.....

- aim to diffuse the situation or prevent a pupil being hurt – you have a legal duty to do so
- try to diffuse the fight by using a verbal intervention
- only intervene physically if a verbal intervention fails and if absolutely necessary, make sure you safeguard yourself
- send a trustworthy pupil for help if there is no other adult available or ring for help using your mobile if appropriate

DON'T.....

- ignore the situation

SUSPICIONS OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

DO.....

- try to contain the pupil on school premises without further questioning or investigation
- call for back-up from senior staff
- call for a first-aid trained colleague via reception



OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

DON'T.....

- ignore the situation

PUPILS LEAVING CLASSROOM WITHOUT PERMISSION

DO.....

- make clear to the pupil that they do not have permission to leave the classroom & that they are making a choice from which there will be a consequence
- report the pupil's absence to the Head Teacher, Assistant Head or Pastoral Worker

DON'T

- attempt to block the pupil's exit by standing in doorway or putting your arm out

PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN STAFF AND PUPILS

DO.....

- be careful about any physical contact with pupils, particularly in one to one situations. Whilst limited physical contact may be appropriate on occasion e.g. an arm around the shoulder of a distressed pupils, you must be very careful about the possibility of misunderstandings

DON'T.....

- poke, push or grab pupils to make them behave
- initiate unnecessary physical contact

INFATUATIONS

DO.....

- report any incidents where you suspect a pupil may have developed an infatuation with you to an SLT member who may decide to discuss the matter with Lesley Barringer
- record your observations and concerns, providing dates and time and an accurate account of any conversation.



OSBALWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

DON'T.....

- behave in a way that could make the pupil feel that their feelings may be reciprocated
- deal with a suspected infatuation on your own – it is vital that you report it immediately

HOME VISITS

DON'T.....

- carry out a home visit unless it is a necessary and explicit part of your job and you have explicit permission from senior management to do so

PHOTOGRAPHY & FILMING OF PUPILS

DO

- make sure that there is a clear educational justification for any photography or filming of pupils
- be clear about the purpose of the photography or filming, particularly to the pupils

DON'T.....

- take photographs in one to one situations



OSALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATION MADE AGAINST A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

The statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006* states that the following process must be followed if the allegation or concern fits within the scope of the statutory guidance that you have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; *or*
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; *or*
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children *or*
- That the allegation is clearly and demonstrably without foundation.

When an allegation or concern is made against a member of school staff, relating to the person's conduct towards a child, the following process **must be followed**.

- The allegation or concern must immediately be reported to the Senior Manager within the Organisation (SMO). For schools, this is almost always the Head Teacher.
- If the allegation or concern relates to the Head Teacher, the matter must be reported to the...
- If the allegation or concern fits with the scope of the guidance, the Head Teacher must report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within the same working day.
- The LADO will discuss the matter with the Head Teacher in order to decide which process should be followed. Where it is believed that allegation falls within the scope of the guidance, there are three possible strands to enquiries that may be initiated:
 - Child protection
 - Criminal enquiries
 - Disciplinary
- If the matter is felt to constitute a criminal offence the police will be informed and a strategy meeting held
- If the matter is felt to be child protection, Children and Family Services will be informed and a strategy meeting held
- If the matter is felt to amount to an employment or capability issue the matter will be discussed with the City of York Council Human Resources Department
- Strategy meetings are convened by Children and Family Services and involve the relevant agencies, including the Head Teacher. The purpose of the strategy meeting is to agree the strategy of the investigation and to ensure that each agency works together. The meeting will always consider the most appropriate support needed for the child and the alleged person.



OSALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Allegation against a member of school staff flow diagram

