



Safeguarding in Education

Code of Conduct Policy

September 2026

The Keys Service

Monitored by:

Dawn Neale

Intervention Manager

Update due: September 2027

Introduction

This document provides a guide for adults working in the Keys Service (including staff, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and students. **All staff within The Keys must read and adhere to the code of conduct at all times.**

It refers to and complements other policies including:

- The Keys Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The Keys Relational Policy
- The Keys Positive Handling Policy
- Coventry City Council Code of Conduct

All staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This code of conduct has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and staff alike.

All adults working within The Keys must know the name of the Designated Safeguarding and Child Protection Co-ordinator, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. All new staff to The Keys will undertake basic awareness Child Protection training as part of their induction procedure.

Designated Safeguarding Child Protection Co-ordinator:

Dawn Neale – Intervention Manager

Deputy Safeguarding Leads

Nicola Dalton, Hannah Brindley, Alison Mesnard, Georgia Stockholm

All staff are responsible for reading, signing and implementing this policy.

Basic Principles

- The child's welfare is paramount (Children's Act 2004)
- Adults working within The Key are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should act in a professional manner at all times.
- Adults working within The Key must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a senior member of staff about any incident which could give rise for concern. Any incidents should be handled promptly and sensitively.
- A record should be kept of any incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with school record keeping policy.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, ethnicity 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.

All staff, volunteers and visitors to The Key must:

- Be familiar with and work in accordance with the policies within The Key, including in particular:
 - Child Protection & Safeguarding
 - Relational policy
 - Positive Handling
 - E-Safety
 - Health and Safety
- Provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils both in and out of school
- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner. For example: not be sarcastic and not making remarks or 'jokes' to students of a personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature.
- Not embarrass or humiliate pupils
- Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any pupil. For example: treating all students equally – never building 'special' relationships or conferring favour on particular pupils
- Not give or receive (other than token) gifts unless arranged through the school.
- Ensure that relationships with pupils remain on a professional footing. For example: only touching pupils for professional reasons when this is necessary and appropriate for the students' wellbeing or safety (more guidance on this is set out in the DFE Guidance for Safe Practice and the Positive Handling Policy referred to above)
- Not behave in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children
- Not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with pupils outside work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems)
- Not develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils. Particular 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)

Confidentiality

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

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

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from The Key Intervention Manager – Dawn Neale. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to The Key Intervention Manager immediately.

This means that staff:

- **Must pass any media or legal enquiries to Dawn Neale,**
- **Are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner**
- **Should seek advice if in any doubt about sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them,**
- **Need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person**

Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are, in many ways, matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff within the Key should ensure they are dressed decently, 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 allegation.

Staff are required to ensure that their clothing and personal presentation support safe working practices when interacting closely and, at times, physically with children. Particular consideration should be given to jewellery, nails and similar items that may pose a health and safety risk, as well as hairstyles being suitable for the work carried out.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- **Promotes a positive and professional image**
- **Is appropriate to their role, considering safe practice**
- **Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative**
- **Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding**
- **Is absent of any contentious slogans**
- **Is not considered to be discriminatory**

NB: Please see Appendix 1 for further detail

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice.

This means adults should:

- **Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described**
- **Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent**
- **Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny**

Educational Visits

Staff should refer to the Policy on Educational Visits for detailed guidance on safeguarding during visits.

This means that adults should:

- **Always have another adult present in out-of-school activities where possible, unless otherwise agreed with Key Intervention Manager or DSL / DDSL in her absence.**
- **Undertake a risk assessment**
- **Have parental consent to the activity**
- **Ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times**

Home Visits/School visits

- All staff should keep a record of home visits on Cpoms.
- Staff on site must know and be aware of the whereabouts of staff on home visits at all times.
- Staff on home visits must check-in with their line manager once the visit is over.
- All staff should keep a record of school visits by completing a school visit report on Cpoms, following the format agreed.
- Scheduled home visits and school visits must be added to the Key electronic calendars prior to the visit commencing.
- Home visits must always be attended by 2 members of staff.

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing).

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of

their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. In addition, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special educational needs, regardless of age and ability must be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements.

This means that adults should:

- **Make other staff aware of the tasks being undertaken**
- **Explain to the child what is happening.**

Social Networking Sites

Social Networking sites e.g. Facebook, should not be accessed on the school premises. Public comments on such networking sites that may be detrimental to The Key will result in disciplinary procedures. Staff should not respond to inappropriate contact requests from parents, former pupils and pupils.

Whatsapp / social media groups

It is acceptable that social media groups are set up amongst staff members to communicate quickly and efficiently, however the following rules must be followed when using this type of communication:

- No images of pupils should be on the group at all.
- No identifying factors relating to pupils should be used.
- All chat must remain professional.
- No detrimental comments either to or about other members of staff whether they are involved in the group or not.
- Any inappropriate use of the group must be reported to Dawn Neale.

Mobile Phones

Staff will ensure that personal mobile phones (and any wrist worn devices that can be used for communication purposes) are switched off and kept out of learning areas at all times of the school day (preferably locked in the office area). This also includes during meetings and training sessions held within the Key.

Personal mobile phones **MUST NOT** be used in learning areas while pupils are on site under any circumstances, and disciplinary action may be taken if this element of policy is not followed.

If staff need to use a personal mobile phone during the school day, they must do this during official breaks and lunchtimes*, away from the learning areas.

*At Parkgate Key site, the Kitchen is used as a staffroom for staff's designated lunch breaks, staff have permission to use their mobile phones in these areas during their lunch break while there are no pupils present.

*At Little Heath Key site, staff have a designated staff area away from the pupil areas where mobile phones can be used while there are no pupils present.

In order to maintain a high professional standard, staff will only use a mobile phone in a closed room or office where no pupils are present. No members of staff should use mobile phones to take photographs of children.

There are 'Key' mobile phones in both Key Settings. Staff members should share the 'Key Phone' number with emergency contacts in the case of them needing to be contacted during school hours.

STAFF ID badges

All staff members have council issued ID badges, these badges must be worn at all times during working hours, including on trips and visits to schools / homes. Any badges lost or damaged must be reported immediately to Dawn Neale.

Visitors may have their own school ID which can be worn, however any visitors, unless otherwise agreed by the Intervention Manager must not be alone with the children at any time and must wear a visitor badge.

Working Hours

At the Key we have a variety of working contracts for staff members which are agreed at point of interview and offer of contract. Staff working hours relate to their individual contracts and must be adhered to at all times.

Staff are expected to be ready and prepared to start work at their allocated time and finish working duties at the time specified for their contracted hours. For example, if a staff member's contracted hours are 8am to 4pm, they are on site and ready to start work at 8am and work up until 4pm, unless otherwise directed by the Intervention Manager.

Whilst the pupils are on site staff members will be engaging and supporting the pupils to make the best possible progress they can, staff will always be available and accessible to the pupils' needs.

Any changes to contracted hours must be discussed and agreed with the Intervention Manager, Dawn Neale.

Whistleblowing

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of Dawn Neale and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

All staff should know the name of the Keys designated teacher for child protection, or the equivalent individual, and know and follow relevant child protection policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to their designated person for child protection.

All staff working for the Key Service will ensure they present and conduct themselves in a manner that shows professionalism, care and thought for the service users as well as for each other. If any staff member feels concerned by the conduct of others, they have the right to discuss this professionally with the Intervention Manager.

APPENDIX 1

Within the Keys we aim to foster a culture of professionalism and pride. 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 of course professionalism.

We believe that staff are role models for pupils and should therefore dress accordingly.

All staff should dress appropriately for the activities they are undertaking, including PE or Outdoor Learning.

GUIDELINES

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 when deciding what to wear during the course of a normal school day.

Short skirts, short shorts and sheer or low-cut tops/dresses will not be worn. Underwear should not be visible at any time. T-shirts with inappropriate slogans or pictures are not allowed.

On days where staff are teaching PE, they should wear sportswear when undertaking PE lessons for reasons of health and safety and to act as a role model.

Offensive visible tattoos and visible body piercings are discouraged (see also jewellery). These should not pose a safety/infection risk to pupils and as such, any new tattoos and body piercings should be covered with an appropriate dressing.

FOOTWEAR

Staff will wear appropriate footwear at all times, including for PE. No high heeled shoes.

STAFF DRESS FOR PUPIL VISITS OUT OF SCHOOL

On trips/visits where the pupils are wearing outdoor or casual clothing (e.g. outdoor pursuits) it is right that staff would also wear casual or appropriate clothing including jeans, but ID must be worn.

JEWELLERY

Staff are not discouraged from wearing jewellery, however it is essential that the wearing of any jewellery does not put either the staff member or the pupils at risk. The Key managers have the right to request jewellery is removed if they believe it poses a risk.

IMPLEMENTING & MONITORING THIS POLICY

Staff should inform Dawn Neale if they have a concern over the dress of another staff member.

Dawn Neale is responsible for overseeing compliance with the school's dress code. Staff are expected to exercise professional judgement and dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and responsibilities within the setting.

Staff will be asked to return home and change if what they are wearing does not follow Dress Code Policy.