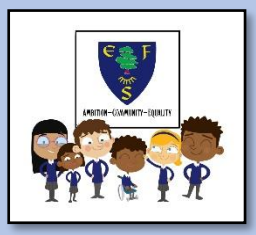
PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES POLICY

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and procedures for professional boundaries at Elms Farm Primary School.
IT WAS DEVELOPED in Autumn 2022 through a process of consultation with staff, governors, parents and Local Authority procedures.
IT WAS RE-APPROVED by the governing body in March 2023.
REVIEWED: September 2026

Our School Values



Ambition: We are ambitious for every child to achieve their best and be ambitious about their learning and their future.

Community: We value everyone in our community and learn how to look after each other and our environment. We respect each other and work together.

Equality: We value each other, our beliefs and differences are celebrated. Everyone is treated equally and fairly.

We are a Rights Respecting School

This policy links to the UN Convention for the right of the child:

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Elms Farm Primary School is committed to providing a safe learning environment for our pupils. This policy outlines the school's approach to maintaining professional boundaries and appropriate behaviour with pupils, which must be followed by all staff. Teachers are expected to maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and always observing the proper boundaries appropriate to their profession. All staff will be expected to help create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment for pupils while maintaining professional boundaries.

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1.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- Education Act 2002

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Driving at Work Policy

2.0 PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

2.1 All staff will:

- Always maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at and consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils. This includes making sexual remarks and discussing their own relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.
- Only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms; personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.

2.2 In the case that any inappropriate contact is made with pupils, it will be raised with the headteacher, and handled in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

2.3 In the case that a pupil is consistently attempting to befriend or contact a member of staff on social media, the member of staff will inform the headteacher as soon as possible.

3.0 FORMER PUPILS

3.1 Staff will be strongly discouraged from forming personal relationships with former pupils, including on social media, as well as with the parents of any pupils on social media.

3.2 In the event of the school becoming aware of a close relationship between a member of staff and a former pupil which may raise concerns about their suitability to work with children, the headteacher will contact the LA designated officer (LADO) for advice and guidance.

3.3 Any inappropriate contact made with former pupils will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

4.0 DUTY OF CARE

4.1 The headteacher will ensure all staff recognise that:

- They are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority and influence with their pupils, which means there is a power imbalance within a pupil-teacher dynamic.
- They have the responsibility to have the best interest of pupils in mind.
- They should be a model of good behaviour, challenging inappropriate actions and language, and promoting respect and tolerance.
- The Education Act 2002 imposes clear duties to provide acceptable levels of care to protect pupils from all reasonably foreseeable risks and harm.

5.0 APPROPRIATE LANGUGAE & PHYSICAL CONTACT

5.1 **Appropriate language:**

Staff will be informed that pupils should not be treated as friends. Staff will not:

- Use inappropriate names or terms of endearment.
- Allow inappropriate conversations to occur.
- Treat pupils disrespectfully or discriminatorily, based upon their perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity and any other pupil characteristic.

- Subject pupils to humiliation, profanity or vilification.
- Allow or partake in suggestive humour, banter, jokes or innuendos
- Use obscene or inappropriate gestures and language.
- Partake in personal conversations, including on the phone, where this may be overheard by pupils.

5.2 **Physical contact:**

5.2.1 All staff members will, as much as possible, respect the personal space and privacy of all pupils, and will avoid situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact.

5.2.3 The school understands that there are, however, circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid, assisting with intimate care, or using reasonable force, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with the school's First Aid Policy, Intimate Care Policy and Physical Intervention Policy.

5.2.4 When any necessary physical contact is made with pupils, it will be conducted in a way which is responsive their needs, is of as limited duration as possible and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, and background.

5.2.5 Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.

5.2.6 Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account.

5.2.7 Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

5.2.8 Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.

5.2.9 If a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

5.2.10 Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher in line with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy and appropriate procedures will be followed.

5.2.11 Extra caution will be taken with physical contact where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

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6.0 APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

6.1 The headteacher will ensure staff are aware that they must not:

• Discuss personal information with pupils, such as concerning their lifestyle or marital status, unless it is directly relevant to the topic being taught.

• Correspond in a personal nature through any medium with pupils, e.g. phone calls or text messages, unless it is within the staff member's role and via an approved communication method, e.g. school emails.

• Adopt an ongoing support role beyond the scope of their position.

• Use personal equipment for approved activities, such as a personal camera, unless approved in writing by the SLT, and will not photograph, audio record or film pupils without authorisation from the SLT and consent from the pupil's parent.

• Save images, videos or audio recordings of pupils on personal devices, unless authorised by the SLT or parents.

• Upload images, videos or audio recordings of pupils to any location without consent from parents and the SLT.

• Discuss or share information regarding other pupils or members of staff; staff should be aware of their surroundings when speaking to others, as their conversations may be overheard.

• Ignore instances of inappropriate behaviour amongst pupils.

6.2 Staff will be informed that they must not:

- Invite or allow pupils to visit their home.
- Allow pupils to access staff members' personal devices.
- Attend pupils' homes or their social gatherings, unless approved by the SLT.
- Be alone with a pupil outside of teaching responsibilities, unless approved by the SLT.
- Enter changing rooms or toilets occupied by pupils, when supervision is not required or appropriate, use toilet facilities allocated to pupils, or undress in facilities intended for use by pupils.
- Not transport a pupil unless in line with the Driving at Work Policy.
- Carry out one-to-one tutoring, mentoring or coaching of pupils, unless approved by the headteacher or SLT.
- Give personal gifts or special favours, or disproportionately single specific pupils out for special duties or responsibilities.

- Offer overnight, weekend or holiday care as a respite to parents without the approval of the headteacher.

7.0 ALLEGATIONS

7.1 The headteacher will be the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of a staff member overstepping professional boundaries with a pupil. They will be responsible for deciding with the DSL and LADO, where appropriate, the course of action of each allegation.

7.2 Should an allegation be made against the headteacher, it will be brought to the attention of the chair of governors immediately. In the case that an allegation is made, the school will follow the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

8.0 MONITORING & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and DSL, and in response to any new safeguarding requirements or concerns surrounding the wider cultural issues in the school. The next scheduled review for this policy is **September 2027**.