

# St Patrick's Primary School



Draft Code of Conduct Policy  
September 2016

### Mission Statement:

As a Catholic School, we at St Patrick's, Legamaddy, seek to provide a caring, secure and happy environment in which all children are treated as unique individuals who are given the opportunity to grow in independence and develop self-confidence.

We believe this will enable our children to be better prepared personally, academically, spiritually and socially for the challenges of young adult life.

### We aim to:

- Develop the young person as an individual and help them become a positive contributor to society.
- Enable children to reach their full potential by providing a broad and balanced curriculum with a varied range of extra-curricular activities.
- Work closely with home, community & church to create an environment in which we promote learning.
- Develop spiritual awareness through a strong Catholic Ethos which encourages the values of trust, honesty, respect, tolerance and a sense of fair play.
- Utilize emerging technologies to develop the child's ability to become effective learners and provide them with the life skills for modern society.

## Code of Conduct

In St Patrick's Primary School we want all our pupils and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the educational experience which our school offers.

Staff and volunteers in school have a privileged position in working with young people and need to be accountable for the manner in which they interact with children and conduct themselves around them, both inside and outside school. By the very nature of the context of school and its activities, staff and volunteers need to follow a Code of Conduct. Equally children and parents have the right to expect that staff and volunteers in school will behave appropriately and act professionally at all times.

As staff members and as volunteers in St Patrick's Primary School, we are mindful that our behaviour towards our pupils should always be above reproach and we acknowledge the need to exercise caution in our dealings with the children in our care.

We subscribe to the following good practice in this area:

- When the need arises to interview a pupil individually, it is important to let another member of staff know that the meeting is happening and where it will be taking place. The venue should, if at all possible, have a window and, if this is not so, a door should be left ajar if this is appropriate to the meeting. However where possible, another member of staff should be present when a pupil is being interviewed.
- It is good practice to avoid unnecessary physical contact with our pupils. We acknowledge, however, that it is neither practical nor desirable to suggest that there should be no physical contact and we would not wish to see a distressed child deprived of a reassuring or comforting touch because of a fear of physical contact. Where a pupil indicates, however, that he/she is uncomfortable with such contact it should never take place. Additionally, it is best practice to avoid any physical contact which might be open to misinterpretation by the child or by others.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the pupil or others around them, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations. At St Patrick's Primary School we have a policy on Safe Handling which sets out procedures to be followed in this instance.

- Staff and volunteers will not make inappropriate, personal comments about a child's appearance or dress.
- Staff and volunteers will treat pupils with respect and fairness, without favour or preference.
- Relationships with parents should always be courteous.
- Relationships between staff should always be professional.
- Staff and volunteers will follow the Internet Safety Policy. Members of staff are not permitted to give pupils access to their personal mobile phone numbers or to their personal email addresses. All electronic communications with pupils should be via the official school emailing system.
- Social Networking sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. Great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff, volunteers, parents and pupils at all times. No member of our staff will communicate with pupils via social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community (including pupils, parents, staff, volunteers, Board of Governors and school events/incidents) should never be posted on personal, social networking sites. Staff should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others sites (e.g. friends and family) which may not have the privacy settings recommended.
- Staff and volunteers may only take photographs with school cameras and images are to be erased after display, except those in pupils' portfolios or evidence books. Copies of photographs are not to be downloaded for personal records or for personal use.
- Mobile phones must be switched onto silent mode during contractual hours. They may be used during break-time and lunch time. Use of mobile phones is not permitted during working hours unless in exceptional circumstances.
- Pupils are not permitted to keep mobile phones or any other electronic devices with them in school. They may leave them in the Principal's office before 9.00am and collect them at home time.

- We value greatly the relationships which exist between staff, volunteers, parents and pupils in our school and we would wish to see those maintained. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional so that the warm and caring atmosphere which is an integral part of our community and which is so nourishing for everyone, is enabled to flourish.
- Staff members and volunteers should be particularly careful when interacting with pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.
- Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and lead to questions about the motives for the choice. If in doubt about the appropriateness of particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.

## Relationships and Attitudes

Staff members and volunteers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, always taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

## Verbal Interaction

All verbal exchanges in school shall be conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, will voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Verbally humiliating or frightening pupils as a means of punishment is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations but the humour used must be understood and appropriate.

## Professional Dress

Casual dress is frequently perceived as indicative of a casual attitude. Everyone needs to play a part in ensuring that acceptable professional dress is always adhered to in order to present a professional image of St Patrick's Primary School, in which everyone can have confidence. Trousers are perfectly acceptable but blue denim jeans are not. Casual or sports clothes are appropriate on Sports Day, days on which staff members or volunteers are taking or assisting with a PE lesson, trips and/or training days. If anyone is in doubt about what is acceptable, please ask for clarification from the Principal.

## Conclusion to Code of Conduct

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interact with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

## Monitoring of the Code of Conduct

The monitoring of the actions described in this Code of Conduct is the responsibility of all staff members and volunteers. Any breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal, to a member of the Safeguarding Team, to a senior member of staff, or to a member of the Board of Governors. The matter will then be dealt with according to the school's Safeguarding Procedures and/or the school's Disciplinary Procedures.

Signed: Mrs Sarah McDowell (Principal)

Signed: Mr Donal McEvoy (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: September 2016

Please sign below and return this sheet to the Principal's Office by \_\_\_\_\_.

St Patrick's Primary School's Code of Conduct

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read St Patrick's Primary School's Code of

Conduct and agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_