

ASHCROFT INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Providing the best start in life for all children



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Headteacher: _____

Chair of Governors: _____

Person Responsible for Policy and Review: Headteacher

Policy Type: Statutory

DOCUMENT AND VERSION CONTROL

Version	Author	Implementation Date	Revision Detail
1.0	Jayne Fellows	September 2026	Completely rewritten to reflect current legislation

Ratified by Governors: September 2026

Review Date: September 2026

1. Purpose, scope and principles

Ashcroft Infant and Nursery School is committed to providing the best start in life for all children. Adults working here have a particular responsibility to model kindness, respect, fairness, honesty and professional behaviour. This code establishes clear, consistent expectations so that children are safe, families can trust us and colleagues are treated with dignity.

The code applies to teaching and support staff, leaders, trainees, temporary and supply staff, agency workers, volunteers and, as relevant to their work and presence on site, contractors and other adults working on behalf of the school. Governors are expected to uphold equivalent standards and follow the school's governance and safeguarding procedures. Employment-related action will be taken through the appropriate arrangements for the individual concerned.

The code applies in school, during visits and school events, in work-related online spaces and outside work where conduct has a relevant impact on safeguarding, professional trust or the school. It is not exhaustive: where no rule addresses a situation, staff must act in children's best interests, maintain appropriate boundaries and seek advice from the headteacher or designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

A breach may lead to management action, safeguarding procedures, disciplinary action or a referral to an appropriate external agency, as warranted by the circumstances. The school will respond fairly and proportionately.

2. Legal framework and related guidance

As a local-authority-maintained school, Ashcroft operates within the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, including regulation 7 on procedures for the regulation of staff conduct. This code takes account of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the statutory early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework for group and school-based providers in force from September 2026, the Teachers' Standards, the Equality Act 2010 and applicable employment, health and safety and data protection law.

Personal data must be handled in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 as amended, including relevant changes under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Where statutory guidance or law changes, current requirements take precedence over any outdated wording in this code.

3. General professional responsibilities

All staff must:

- Be reliable, punctual and ready to undertake their assigned duties at their agreed start time, including pupil supervision and safe handovers.
- Carry out their role in accordance with their job description, applicable professional standards, school policies, safeguarding training and reasonable management instructions.
- Treat children, parents and carers, colleagues, governors and visitors with dignity, fairness and respect. Discrimination, bullying, intimidation, harassment and humiliating language are unacceptable.

- Set an age-appropriate example through calm, professional speech and conduct, including when under pressure or disagreeing with a colleague or parent.
- Respect the rights of others, promote the school's inclusive ethos and uphold fundamental British values. Personal beliefs must not be imposed on children or used to exploit their vulnerability.
- Keep professional disagreements away from children and families and use the correct channels to raise concerns.
- Maintain accurate records and give truthful information in all work-related dealings; never falsify registers, pupil records, assessments, safeguarding records, claims or other documents.
- Complete required training and reading, ask for clarification where needed and report any circumstance that materially affects their ability to work safely.

All staff must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full, not merely its overview, and confirm understanding as directed by the school. Staff must also know how to access the current Safeguarding Policy, safeguarding reporting arrangements and any relevant policies as directed by the headteacher.

4. Safeguarding, child protection and reporting

4.1 Everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff must remain alert to abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse affecting children, online harm, bullying, harmful sexual behaviour and signs that a child may need early help or protection. Concerns can arise from a disclosure, observed behaviour, an injury, a change in attendance or an interaction with an adult. Staff must not investigate allegations themselves or promise a child secrecy.

Report any child safeguarding concern promptly to the DSL or a deputy DSL using the school's current recording and reporting arrangements. Where there is immediate danger, take urgent action, including calling 999 when appropriate. If a DSL is unavailable, staff must not delay appropriate action or referral. Record a clear, factual account promptly, including the child's words where relevant, the date, actions taken and the person informed.

Staff working in nursery and Reception must also follow the current EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements and Ashcroft's procedures for supervision, collection, toileting and intimate care, safer eating, medication and appropriate use of technology.

4.2 Concerns and allegations about adults that may meet the harm threshold

Report immediately to the headteacher any allegation that an adult working in or on behalf of the school has harmed or may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may be unsuitable to work with children because of their behaviour inside or outside school. If the concern is about the headteacher, report it directly to the chair of governors. If a child is in immediate danger, act at once to protect them.

The headteacher, or chair of governors where the concern is about the headteacher, will act as case manager and follow the school's safeguarding procedures, including consultation with the local authority designated officer (LADO) and referrals to relevant agencies where required. Staff must not

conduct their own investigation, interview witnesses or alert a person who is the subject of an allegation unless instructed to do so.

4.3 Low-level concerns about adults

A low-level concern is behaviour that is inconsistent with this code, but does not appear to meet the harm threshold. “Low-level” does not mean insignificant. Examples include being excessively familiar with a child, showing favouritism, humiliating a pupil, being alone with a child in an unnecessarily concealed setting or taking a pupil photograph on a personal device.

Share any low-level concern promptly with the headteacher through the school’s safeguarding reporting arrangements; where it concerns the headteacher, report it to the chair of governors. Staff are encouraged to self-report conduct or situations that could be misinterpreted. If uncertain whether a matter meets the harm threshold, report it rather than attempting to classify it yourself.

The school will record concerns securely, consider the context, identify any patterns, take proportionate action and seek LADO advice where appropriate. Confidentiality will be respected on a need-to-know basis. Concerns relating to supply staff or contractors will be shared with their employer where appropriate.

4.4 Whistleblowing

Staff must raise concerns about unsafe practice, safeguarding failures, breaches of legal obligations or attempts to conceal wrongdoing. Normally concerns should be raised with the headteacher; concerns about the headteacher should go to the chair of governors. Follow Ashcroft’s Whistleblowing Policy for the full procedure. If staff feel unable to raise a safeguarding concern internally, they may seek advice from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or approach the appropriate external agency.

The school will take concerns seriously and will not tolerate victimisation of a person who raises a genuine concern. Confidentiality will be respected as far as practicable, but anonymity cannot always be guaranteed.

5. Professional relationships and boundaries with pupils

Relationships with children must be warm, caring, fair and appropriate to the adult’s role and the child’s age, needs and stage of development. Staff must not exploit their position, pursue personal or sexual relationships with pupils, use inappropriate language, threaten or humiliate children, give preferential treatment for personal reasons or encourage secrecy.

Where a one-to-one conversation or support is necessary, use a suitable, observable location wherever practicable and ensure another colleague is aware. Confidentiality, a child’s needs or appropriate intimate care may require privacy, but agreed safeguarding and intimate-care procedures must always be followed.

Physical contact, including comfort and assistance with personal care, must meet a child’s needs, be appropriate to the situation and be in line with safeguarding, SEND, intimate-care and behaviour policies. Never use physical contact as punishment or for an adult’s gratification. Any restrictive

physical intervention must be necessary, lawful, proportionate and carried out and recorded in accordance with Ashcroft's policy and any relevant individual plan.

Staff must not exchange personal contact details with pupils, message pupils privately or arrange personal meetings with them. Gifts or rewards for pupils must be appropriate, transparent, equitable and within school arrangements. A staff member with a concern about an interaction involving themselves or another adult must report it promptly in accordance with section 4.

6. Communication with parents, carers and the school community

Communicate with parents and carers politely, objectively and through school-approved channels. Where authorised as part of their role, staff may use school systems such as ClassDojo for routine home-school communication. Safeguarding concerns, allegations, sensitive personal information and urgent matters must be passed through the appropriate school procedure rather than handled through informal or personal messages.

Do not use a personal social media account, private telephone number, personal email address or personal messaging account to establish school-related contact with pupils or families. Where a pre-existing family friendship, community connection or other personal relationship makes incidental contact unavoidable, maintain professional boundaries, do not discuss confidential school matters and disclose any possible conflict of interest to the headteacher.

Staff must not speak on behalf of the school to journalists, on public forums or to third parties without authorisation. Refer media enquiries and requests for official school comment to the headteacher.

7. Sexual harassment, bullying and respectful working relationships

Ashcroft expects a working environment in which colleagues feel safe and respected. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may occur in person, online, during work events or through messages. Examples include unwanted touching, sexualised comments or jokes, repeated unwelcome advances, suggestive messages and sharing offensive sexual material.

Staff must not engage in sexual harassment, bullying, discriminatory conduct or victimisation. Staff who witness inappropriate conduct should raise it appropriately and support those affected. Report concerns to the headteacher, or to the chair of governors if the concern involves the headteacher. Where appropriate, staff may also use the school's grievance, disciplinary or whistleblowing procedures. Complaints will be handled sensitively, fairly and promptly, with appropriate support and steps to protect complainants and witnesses from victimisation.

The school will take reasonable preventative steps, including appropriate training, risk assessment, clear routes for reporting concerns and follow-up where themes or repeated concerns are identified. Nothing in this section prevents a staff member from seeking external advice or using a lawful external reporting route.

8. Personal devices, photography and acceptable use of technology

Personal mobile phones and similar devices must be kept secure and must not be used for personal calls, messaging, social media or photography while supervising children or in pupil-facing areas. Personal use should take place only during an appropriate break, in a designated staff area and in accordance with school procedures. An urgent personal situation should be discussed with the headteacher or line manager so that supervision remains safe.

Never use a personal phone, camera, smartwatch, tablet or other personal device to photograph, film, record or store images or personal information about a pupil. Use only school-authorised equipment, accounts and systems for pupil images and educational records, in line with relevant permissions and the school's Online Safety and Data Protection Policies. School cameras and iPads used for pupil records should remain on site unless the headteacher has expressly authorised an exception and secure arrangements are in place.

School IT systems and equipment are for approved school purposes. Staff must protect accounts and passwords, use multi-factor authentication where directed, report suspected phishing or security incidents and avoid illegal, offensive or inappropriate content. Limited necessary personal use of school systems is permitted only if explicitly authorised. Monitoring of school systems, where undertaken, will be lawful, proportionate and explained in the school's relevant notices and policies.

Where the school authorises a work-related use of a personal device, for example a multi-factor authentication prompt, staff must use it discreetly and must not capture, download or disclose pupil data through a personal account or app.

8.1 Messaging groups and digital communication

School-authorised staff messaging groups may be used only for their stated operational purpose. For example, an approved absence-notification group may be used to alert the school that a member of staff will be absent, but must not be used to circulate pupil information, personal medical details, safeguarding concerns, confidential staffing matters or photographs of children. Formal pupil, staffing and safeguarding records belong in approved school systems.

8.2 Artificial intelligence tools

Staff may use AI tools for school work only where the proposed tool and purpose are authorised and consistent with the school's data protection, safeguarding, copyright and IT requirements. Do not enter identifiable pupil, family or staff information, safeguarding records, medical information, photographs or other confidential school material into a public or unapproved AI tool. Any exceptional use of personal data with AI requires prior school approval and appropriate data protection checks.

Check AI-generated information for accuracy, bias, appropriateness and copyright before use; a member of staff remains responsible for the final work and any decision about a child. Report any accidental disclosure promptly under the school's data breach procedures.

9. Confidentiality, records and data protection

Access and share personal information only where needed for an authorised purpose. Store, transport, print and dispose of documents securely; keep screens and paper records away from unauthorised viewers; use approved systems for transferring information; and promptly report any suspected data breach or lost record. Confidential discussions must not take place where they may be overheard.

Do not share confidential information about children, families, staff, governors or school business with friends, relatives or unauthorised colleagues, or post it online. A personal relationship with a family does not entitle a staff member to additional information. Follow the school's records-retention and secure-disposal procedures, including using confidential waste and shredding arrangements as directed.

Confidentiality never prevents a necessary, lawful safeguarding referral, whistleblowing disclosure or other disclosure required or permitted by law. Requests for personal information, including subject access requests, must be referred to the appropriate school contact; staff must not assume that a parent is entitled to every item in a pupil record.

10. Honesty, conflicts of interest, gifts and school finances

Staff must act honestly when recording attendance, assessments, safeguarding decisions, working time, qualifications, professional history, expenses and financial transactions. They must comply with the school's and local authority's financial procedures. Commitments to expenditure or contracts may be made only by authorised staff under agreed controls.

Staff must disclose to the headteacher any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest involving themselves or a close connection, including a relationship with a governor, staff member, supplier or contractor where this could affect purchasing, recruitment, decision-making or school activities. Complete and update the school's declaration of interests form (Appendix 1). For a conflict involving the headteacher, refer the matter to the chair of governors.

A modest, customary thank-you gift from a parent or pupil may generally be accepted where it creates no expectation of favour. Staff must not solicit gifts or accept money, hospitality or other benefits that could influence, or appear to influence, professional decisions. Any gift or offer that is substantial, unusual, linked to a purchasing or employment decision, or otherwise raises concern must be declared promptly to the headteacher and recorded in accordance with the school's gifts and hospitality arrangements. No monetary threshold has been assumed in this policy; any school or local-authority threshold must also be followed.

11. Dress and professional appearance

Staff should be clean, presentable and dressed appropriately for their role, the school environment and the age of pupils. Clothing must be suitable for active supervision, play and safe movement, and should not be excessively revealing or display offensive, discriminatory or politically campaigning slogans. Staff leading physical education or similar activities should wear appropriate sportswear while maintaining a professional appearance.

In line with Ashcroft's existing expectations, blue denim should not be worn as normal workwear. Footwear must be practical and secure enough to respond promptly to a child's needs or a safety incident. Any dress requirement will be applied reasonably and without unlawful discrimination, with consideration of disability, religion, pregnancy and other relevant needs. Discuss a necessary adjustment with the headteacher.

12. Health, safety, fitness for work and personal wellbeing

Staff must follow the school's Health and Safety Policy and relevant risk assessments, report hazards and incidents, use equipment safely and take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others. Personal medication must be stored so that children cannot access it, unless an agreed arrangement is required for immediate emergency use.

Staff must attend work fit to carry out their duties safely and must tell the headteacher or line manager when a health condition, medication effect or other circumstance creates a relevant safety concern or requires support or a reasonable adjustment. Medical information will be treated confidentially and shared only as necessary.

Alcohol or illegal drugs must not be used during working hours, while responsible for children or in any circumstances that impair fitness for duty. No member of staff may work while impaired. Smoking and vaping are not permitted on school premises or while supervising pupils. Alcohol at an authorised out-of-hours adult event is subject to the headteacher's express permission and must never compromise safeguarding responsibilities.

13. Other employment, use of school resources and copyright

Staff may undertake additional employment or voluntary work where it does not create a conflict of interest, compromise safeguarding, impair performance, misuse school information or resources, or breach applicable working-time rules. Staff should disclose any material conflict or potential impact to the headteacher; individual contractual obligations must also be observed.

School premises, equipment, accounts, supplies and systems must not be used for private business or another employer without prior authorisation. Staff must respect copyright and relevant licence conditions when using published text, online materials, music, images, software and AI-generated content.

14. Conduct outside work and duty to disclose relevant matters

Outside work, staff are entitled to a private life and to hold personal views. They must nevertheless maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that presents a safeguarding concern, undermines lawful professional obligations or materially damages trust in their role. Do not publish confidential information or make abusive, discriminatory or threatening statements concerning members of the school community.

Staff must notify the headteacher promptly and confidentially about any arrest, charge, conviction, caution, relevant investigation, restriction or other development that may affect their suitability to work with children, safeguarding duties or ability to fulfil their role, subject to applicable legal

protections. A concern relating to the headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors. The school will consider the relevance of the information fairly, in accordance with law and its safeguarding and employment procedures.

Staff should seek advice about any personal relationship or association that may create a safeguarding risk, an actual conflict of interest or a disqualification issue relevant to their specific childcare role; this is not a requirement to disclose every family member's private circumstances.

15. Implementation, concerns and review

The headteacher will make the code available on induction and whenever it is updated, ensure staff know how to seek advice and report concerns, and refer breaches into the appropriate procedure. The governing body will oversee effective implementation and ensure concerns about the headteacher have an appropriate reporting route.

Staff will be asked to acknowledge that they have read and understood the code and the required associated safeguarding information. The governing body will review it annually, with an earlier review if legislation, statutory guidance or school procedures change.

16. Related school policies and required reading

This code must be read alongside the current, approved versions of Ashcroft's Safeguarding Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Online Safety Policy and acceptable-use arrangements; Data Protection and information security procedures; Behaviour Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Intimate Care and relevant EYFS procedures; Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures; relevant home-school communication arrangements; and any other information as directed by the headteacher. Other policies, including gifts and hospitality and declarations of interest procedures, apply where adopted.

All staff must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full and complete the school's safeguarding and Prevent training requirements. Staff must refer to the current school versions of the above policies rather than assuming a historic copy remains in force.

Appendix 1 – Staff declaration of interests

Complete on appointment, on request and whenever an interest changes. Declare a relevant direct or indirect interest held by you, your partner or a close family member in an organisation with which the school may do business, or another relationship that may create an actual, potential or perceived conflict. If unsure, seek advice from the headteacher before making the relevant decision.

Name of person / company / organisation	Nature of interest or relationship	Could school decisions be affected? / action agreed

I confirm that I have declared relevant interests to the best of my knowledge and will notify the headteacher promptly of any material change.

Staff member name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

Review date: _____

Reference materials informing this revision

Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force 1 September 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Department for Education, EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (September 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Department for Education, Data protection in schools (including AI and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 guidance): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>

Equality and Human Rights Commission, Preventing sexual harassment at work: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/preventing-sexual-harassment-work-checklist-and-action-plan-employers>