Pathways School

Code of Conduct for Staff

Policy Monitoring

Date policy last reviewed: June 2026

Signed by:

Neil Jones	Headteacher	Date:	June 2026
Saima Ali	Chair of governors	Date:	June 2026

Date of next review: June 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedure.

1. Introduction

At Pathways School, we aim to make life fundamentally better for children and young people with autism, and their families and carers.

We will achieve this by:

- Having Consistently high expectations and achievements for every individual.
- Ensuring high quality, inspirational and innovative teaching, and learning.
- Establishing and maintaining a safe, secure, caring, and enjoyable environment in which to work, learn, thrive, and grow towards independence.
- Ensuring that our curriculum is broad and balanced and personally tailored to each individual student, underpinned by accurate and wide-ranging assessment.
- Including well-structured opportunities to learn skills in an intensive way, and then generalising these into natural environments, developing and extending learning.
- Designing and delivering content that is relevant, functional, and interesting for the learner.
- Offering opportunities for students to be creative and adventurous in their learning.
- Providing situations where students gain first-hand experiences using a wide range of resources.
- Supporting essential therapeutic activities such as speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy.
- Using strategies that minimise or alleviate sensory impairments, such as access to the sensory area and the provision of specialist equipment such as sound reducing systems.
- Collaboration with parents, professionals, and agencies, with the community and with the students themselves.

Whatever our role maybe, each one of us has a key part to play in ensuring that we maintain a positive, credible reputation with all our stakeholders, and maintain the highest standards of integrity and effectiveness. We are all accountable in our work and responsible for building and maintaining good working relationships with parents/carers, students, and others.

This code of conduct outlines what Pathways School expects of all those who work here. Failure to follow this code is a serious matter and can lead to disciplinary action.

2. Links to other school policies and practices

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary, Conduct and Grievance Policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Capability of Staff Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

3. Principles

- We invest in our staff and aim high to make sure our work has the biggest impact for children and young people with autism and their families.
- We respect and develop the expertise of our talented staff and make sure that we are evidence based, rigorous and accountable in everything we do.
- We are team players, and we know that making a real difference requires strong teamwork.
- We strive to be open to new ideas, open in how we work and open in how we make decisions.
- We value difference, and we know that creating equal opportunity does not mean one size fits all and aim to make ourselves accessible to children and young people with autism across the spectrum, from all communities and backgrounds.

4. Equal Opportunities & Diversity

Pathways School will ensure that any breaches of this code of conduct are dealt with in line with the Equalities Act. We are committed to equality of opportunity and value diversity in the workplace. It is a condition of employment that all staff are familiar with and understand the Equality and Diversity Policy and actively seek to ensure that it is upheld in their area of work.

5. Political Views

Pathways School precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school. All staff must take reasonably practicable steps to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views

6. Confidentiality

All information about students and their families or about employees or volunteers whether oral, written or recorded electronically is strictly confidential, may only be used for the professional purposes for which they were gathered and may not be shared with third parties or other individuals except within the confines of a professional information exchange. If unsure as to whether a particular piece of information may be confidential it is the staff member's responsibility to treat it as such unless and to seek advice from your manager before proceeding. All staff must follow the guidance as set out in the Data Protection and Data Retention policies. Breach of either policy may lead to disciplinary action. Any notes, photographs, reports, or personal records that may be used as part of day-to-day work must be stored securely and used for the purpose they were obtained only. They must be returned at the termination of any relevant project or at the termination of employment. A staff member may be responsible for managing or reviewing confidential information (for example pupil records). They are responsible for ensuring that they maintain security of these records and do not take them from the school. Failure to follow these procedures can lead to disciplinary action. Staff members be required to sign a confidentiality agreement as an essential requirement of their role.

7. Attendance

The school day for staff starts at 8.30am. Good timekeeping is essential to ensure that students are fully supported throughout the day, and that all staff are treated fairly. Repeated or persistent lateness will be viewed as misconduct. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they record accurately the time they arrive. Each employee's contract defines the minimum hours of work that he/she is contractually required to work, including start time, finish time and provision for breaks.

Employees should arrive at work early enough to enable them to begin work at their appointed start time. Similarly, employees are required to remain at work until the finishing time defined in their contracts, unless granted permission by their line manager to leave work before that time. It is accepted that some circumstances are outside an employees' control, for example if a traffic accident has caused long delays on the roads. However, a high volume of traffic causing delays that is a regular occurrence, or can reasonably be anticipated, will not be regarded as a valid reason for lateness.

Employees also need to be aware of timekeeping while at work, with respect to meetings (for example, morning briefings). If an employee is late to work, a meeting, or other work commitment, the line manager will speak to the employee informally (and privately) to establish the reason for the lateness, and how the employee might be supported to achieve improvement. The line manager is responsible for keeping records of lateness.

If an employee is likely to be late for work, he/she should call ahead before the contracted start time to explain the situation and give an estimated arrival time. If an employee has three or more occasions of lateness within any six-month period, this may lead to a disciplinary procedure.

8. Dress

Clothing should be smart, practical, and appropriate to your role. Care should be taken that clothing is not revealing – this is particularly important because of the client group we work with in the school. The only parts of the body that can be acceptably exposed are:

• Arms (shoulders should be covered)

• Neck and face (chest should be covered)

• Lower legs. Feet should be covered to protect you from injury (again this may depend on your role) e.g., by another person stepping on them, furniture, bikes running over feet. Footwear should be such that you are enabled to work directly with children or young people and to move swiftly and safely in all environments.

Hair should be tied back, where appropriate, and protective equipment worn, where required, to reduce the risk of injury. Staff should not wear clothing with slogans inappropriate to their professional status and position as role models or for children, e.g., FCUK, or any reference to drug or alcohol use/abuse. It is not acceptable to expose underwear at work. Jeans and trainers or other casual clothes are acceptable for staff working directly with the children. There may be occasions, e.g., meetings with parents or Local Authority officers when smarter, business clothing should be worn. Staff are expected to adopt the style of dress appropriate to representing Pathways School within a given forum, and to match their style of dress to the environment. Jewellery can hurt students and it is not sensible to wear anything which may injure a student or the wearer or be easily

broken. Body piercings must be covered. Ear or facial piercings should be limited to simple studs within the workplace for all those staff working directly with children. Inappropriate dress or jewellery will be brought to the wearer's attention by his/her line manager and should be remedied as soon as is feasible and no later than the following day. In extreme cases, a staff member may be sent home.

It is the responsibility of all the staff team working with someone dressed inappropriately to bring this to the wearer's attention if he/she seems not to be aware (e.g., low-cut trousers that expose flesh when seated).

9. Press & Media

Pathways School may be asked to comment on issues relating to our work or activities on site and in the community. Such interest is generally welcomed. However, the messages that go out to the media must be carefully considered and should be in the very best interests of the school. Positive comments and open discussions can at times be distorted or misconstrued. For this reason, the staff are asked not to talk directly to the media at any time without first contacting the Headteacher.

10. Personal Devices / Mobile Phones

No personal devices will be taken into student areas in Pathways School whilst students are on site without prior authorisation from the Headteacher. It is prohibited for devices to be taken into toilets, changing rooms, medical rooms at school without prior authorisation from the Headteacher. No images or videos may be taken or stored of students without the parents' consent. No images or videos may be taken or stored of staff without their consent. Staff must be cautious about the merging of personal and work email accounts on their devices. They must take particular care to ensure that data is only sent through Pathway's email system. If a member of staff suspects that Pathways School data has been sent from a personal email account, either in body text or as an attachment, they must notify the Data Protection Officer immediately

11. Social Media

In all communications staff should:

- be conscious at all times of the need to keep personal and professional lives separate. Staff should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests.
- not engage in activities involving social media which may bring the school into disrepute.
- not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social medium.
- not discuss personal information about students, staff, and any other professionals that they interact with as part of their job, on social media.
- follow safeguarding principles
- be open, honest, ethical, and professional.
- use jargon-free, plain English in professional communication.
- be actioned within an agreed time frame.
- use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context, message, and audience.
- be cost effective.

Staff members are strongly encouraged not to identify themselves as staff members of their school in their personal social media platforms. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members. This does not include professional networking sites.

Staff should not have contact through any social medium with any student.

Staff are advised not to communicate on social media platforms with ex-students except via professional networking sites for professional reasons.

Staff should decline 'friend requests' from students they receive in their personal social media accounts.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues and other parties must not be discussed on their personal social media platforms.

Photographs, videos, or any of images of pupils or students should not be published on personal social media platforms without prior permission of parents/carers and the school.

School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media unless pre-approved by the Headteacher.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives, and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships.

Staff are strongly advised to ensure that they set up and regularly review the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information.

Staff should also carefully select their social media profile picture as it is an extension to their professional image online.

Social media should not be used for work related communication. Communication should be through school email or contact details held by the school.

Any misuse or abuse of social media must be reported to the Headteacher as soon as noticed, especially when concerning a student, parent/guardian, or employee.

12. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when an employee raises a concern about malpractice or a dangerous activity that they are aware of through their work or from colleagues and raises the matter so that it may be investigated and where necessary corrected. It is important that concerns can be raised in a confidential manner with no detriment to the whistle blower. For this reason, Pathways School has a Whistleblowing Policy in place which outlines the steps to be taken by any employee who wishes to raise a concern. Should the concern relate to a Safeguarding matter, the Safeguarding Procedures must be followed.

13. Language

Language used in the workplace should be professional and considered (especially in areas where you are working with children or young people, or which are open to the public). Sexist, racist, homophobic, language which does not promote fundamental British values, or any other abusive language is not acceptable. Swearing is not acceptable within the school or the grounds or when staff is out on school activities.

14. Alcohol & Drugs

We recognise the importance of the health and welfare of our employees. We realise that the misuse of alcohol and drugs is a health problem and, as such, will be treated sympathetically. However, attending work or events outside of normal work hours on behalf of Pathways School when under the influence of alcohol or drugs is likely to be considered as gross misconduct.

15. Money and Donations

Employees should never put themselves under any financial obligation to individuals or organisations that might influence them in their judgement or performance of their duties. Pathways School receives public and private funds to support our work, and we have a duty to fully account for these resources properly and effectively. All employees have a duty to comply with the financial procedures as laid out and appropriate to their roles. All financial transactions must be properly authorised and recorded, and wasteful or unnecessary expenditure must be always avoided.

From time-to-time employees may receive gifts including from funders, suppliers, or parents. To ensure the highest standards of probity any gift must be notified to your line manager.

16. Resources

Valuable equipment must be stored and secured appropriately as directed. We all have a duty to ensure that good care is taken of property and finite resources at all times. This includes items in your care such as work mobile phones.

17. Relationships Students

Staff must never be negative, critical, or undermining in the way they talk about pupils within or outside of their hearing. Where possible children and young people should be included in any discussion about themselves in their presence. Inappropriate discussion about the child, young person, parents/carers or other pupils or personal matters should not occur.

Parents and Carers

Relationships with parents/carers must always remain professional. Employees should ensure that they do not develop personal relationships that could compromise the essential professional relationship. Communications between parents and staff should, in almost all situations, take place during working hours, and should be framed in a positive and professional manner. Staff personal telephone numbers should not be given out. School staff should never discuss pupils or student with their parents/carers and never with the parents of another student.

Governors

Relationships with Governors must always remain professional. Employees should ensure that they do not develop personal relationships with Governors that could affect their professional relationship. Employees should not discuss individual pupils or students with Governors except where essential for professional reasons.

Staff

We recognise that work is demanding and at times can be stressful. Good supportive relationships between colleagues are essential. Staff are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Intolerance and harassment are not acceptable and will be treated seriously. We are committed to operating in such a way as is compatible with confidentiality. In return, staff are expected to display a positive attitude at work. Close personal relationships can develop between members of staff or between a member of staff and a volunteer and these should be declared and open. This is particularly important where one individual in a personal relationship may be the line manager of the other or where issues of integrity or accountability may come into question. Should a staff member find themselves in this situation, they need to inform their line manager.

All personal information about staff and volunteers or about those applying for roles at the school should remain confidential and on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis. All staff members are encouraged to offer each other positive feedback, constructive criticism, and support. It is not acceptable to criticise a colleague or a volunteer in front of a pupil or student or their family or in front of a representative of another organisation. Communication should remain courteous and respectful with all other members of staff. Should a grievance or dispute arise between colleagues the grievance or disciplinary procedures will be used as appropriate.

17. Conflict of Interest

All members are the staff are expected to devote the whole of their professional time, attention and skills to the business and affairs of Pathways School. Any paid or voluntary work undertaken outside of the organisation must have the written approval from the Headteacher. For the avoidance of doubt, "conflict" for the purposes of this clause is understood to include both conflicts as to the nature of the work/activities undertaken and as to the amount of time entailed. Any breach of this clause may render you liable to serious disciplinary action, which could result in your summary dismissal if the circumstances so warrant.

It is a condition of employment staff members do not provide voluntary or paid assistance to parents/carers of students or visit their homes without the written approval from the Headteacher. Any assistance provided under such approval shall be deemed to have been provided in the staff member’s capacity as an individual and not as an employee of Pathways School.

It is also a condition of employment that a staff member, during the term of their employment, without prior written consent, directly or indirectly trade or carry on a profession on their own account or in partnership with any other person or persons or act as servant, agent, or officer of any other person, firm, company, or organization without the prior agreement of the Headteacher.