

Little Dukes: Staff Code of Conduct

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Monitoring and review...

This policy will be continuously monitored, refined and audited by the Headteacher who will also review it annually to assess how efficiently duties have been carried out over the year. This review will take place no later than one year from the date shown below, or sooner if needed due to changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines.

Adopted September 2025

Reviewed by:

- Joanne Allen - Director of Education - Little Dukes
- Nazish Usman - Head of Safeguarding and Compliance - EYFS

Next review due: August 2026

Please note: This policy applies to all nursery schools within Little Dukes, including:

- Hove Village Day Nurseries
- Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nurseries
- Miss Daisy's Nursery Schools
- Miss Daisy's Nursery School Hyde Park Ltd
- The Kindergartens Nursery Schools
- Reflections Nursery and Forest School
- Riverside Nursery Schools
- Bright Beginnings (Twickenham) Ltd
- Twickenham Park Day Nursery Ltd
- Broomfield House School Ltd
- Pippa Pop-ins Nursery Schools

Any reference to 'Little Dukes' applies to all the nurseries named above.

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Statement of intent:

Under the statutory guidance document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024', all Little Dukes Nurseries are required to set out a staff code of conduct/behaviour policy for school employees. At Little Dukes we refer to all staff as team members.

At Little Dukes, we seek to provide a safe and supportive environment consistent with the aims of the school. This document will clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour but must also be read in conjunction with the Staff Handbook.

Core principles:

1. The safety and welfare of children is paramount, and all team members accept individual responsibility in maintaining their knowledge, supporting the safeguarding principles and reporting any concerns.
2. We are an inclusive, diverse, friendly, caring, and professional business and team member's behaviour should always reflect this and our core values.
3. Team members are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
4. Team members should work in an open and transparent way applying high standards of professional behaviour consistent with all the relevant Little Dukes policies.
5. Team members should be aware that failure to follow this code of conduct and the Little Dukes policies may lead to disciplinary action.

Core values:

The four Little Dukes core values below underpin every action and decision we make. All employees should put these values at the heart of everything they do.

- We love learning.
- We are a team.
- We do it well.
- We lead with heart.

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Core areas:

Our code of conduct covers the following areas:

1. Safeguarding behaviour expectations
2. Positive interactions
3. Professional conduct
4. Security of information
5. Post-employment conduct

However, it is important to note that the general principles covered here apply to all areas of your employment and are not limited to these specifics only.

1. Safeguarding behaviour expectations:

The safety and welfare of our children is of paramount importance to us and so every aspect of a team member's behaviour and conduct should put the child first and support a true culture of collective and individual responsibility and focus on keeping our children safe.

Safeguarding duty of care:

- All team members have a duty of care for our children; therefore, we are all accountable for the way in which we exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect children.
- All team members have a duty to keep young people safe, to protect them from harm and therefore to have a solid knowledge of child protection issues and an awareness of the definitions of harm, abuse and neglect.
- All team members, whether paid or voluntary, must follow OFSTED welfare requirements, Health and Safety regulations and all Little Dukes policies and procedure.

Whistleblowing:

Whistleblowing is how team members can voice their concerns made in good faith without fear of repercussion.

- Report to a DSL, Headteacher/senior team member any behaviour by another employee that causes concern, or they consider to be unethical.

- This may include behaviour that is believed to violate any law, rule or regulation or represents corrupt conduct, substantial mismanagement of resources, or is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment or causes a safeguarding concern.
- Reports of such behaviour will be protected against reprisals providing the claim is based on a reasonable belief, is reported to an appropriate person and is in no way vindictive (refer to Whistleblowing Policy).

Suitability declarations and criminal offences:

- Employees are required to update their Headteacher immediately should anything change regarding their suitability to work with children.
- Employees must immediately inform their Headteacher if charged with a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, would significantly affect his/her ability to perform normal duties.

2. Positive interactions:

At Little Dukes, we aim to make every interaction a positive one, we treat all individuals with respect and celebrate their unique contributions. We treat people as we would like to be treated ourselves, whether it is a child, a colleague, a parent/carer or visitor. The behaviours we expect from our team members are laid out below.

Building relationships with children:

Our relationships with children are at the heart of why we do what we do. Strong bonds and close Key Person relationships are the foundation of outstanding education and a confidence in learning.

The Golden Rules:

At Little Dukes, all our interactions with children are founded on strong pedagogical principles the basics of which are distilled into our Little Dukes' Golden Rules.

All team members must:

- Read and understand the Golden Rules
- Apply them to all interactions with children.

Setting an example:

Our children learn from us in every moment of interaction and every observed behaviour they encounter. All team members should therefore:

- Model high standards of behaviour, communication and conduct which can be copied by the children.
- Show punctuality, professional appearance, the use of appropriate language and courteous professional behaviour towards children, parents/carers and colleagues.
- In line with our core values of 'we love learning' and 'we do it well', team members must maintain the highest possible professional standards and performance and aim to continuously keep up to date and improve their professional knowledge.

Behaviour management:

All children and team members have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Team members should:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm and insensitive comments towards children or colleagues is not acceptable.
- Ensure that they follow the Behaviour Policy.
- Ensure that they follow our Golden Rules.

Physical contact:

There are occasions when it is appropriate for team members to have physical contact with children e.g., comforting a distressed young child. In these situations, team members should:

- Use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact; being aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued.
- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent and be prepared to explain actions and accept that physical contact is open to scrutiny.
- In a situation where it is necessary to restrain a child for reasons of health and safety, the details of the restraint must be carefully documented and the parents/carers of the child must be informed of this on the same day in line with our Behaviour Policy.

Building relationships with colleagues and visitors:

In line with our core values 'We are a team' and 'We lead with heart', how we work with our peers is intrinsic to the culture we want to create. To support this, team members must:

- Work cooperatively with colleagues, strive to be friendly, approachable, and welcoming, support and learn from each other and accept differences in personal style.
- Respect and seek, where necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence and acknowledge their contribution.
- Comply with all lawful and reasonable directions given. Complaints about any directions given must be discussed with the Headteacher in order to come to a successful resolution to the complaint.
- Ensure that their decision-making and professional conduct is consistent with the provisions of Equal Opportunities legislation. Employees must ensure they observe the Equal Opportunities principles, exhibit appropriate behaviours, and provide a work environment free from harassment (including sexual), bullying and discrimination.
- Not send by email or any other form of electronic communication material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate, or store any such data on any of the company devices.

Building relationships with parents/carers:

Any interaction is an opportunity to create a positive relationship. Great parent/carer partnerships are at the core of an outstanding nursery. In communications with parents/carers team members must:

- Strive to be friendly, approachable, transparent and professional all times.
- Listen and seek to understand the parents'/carers' perspective while putting the needs of the child first.
- Avoid defensive or negative language and body language.
- Aim to find a positive solution to any problem.
- Seek professional help and support where needed.

3. Professional conduct:

At Little Dukes, we pride ourselves not only on our passion for learning and doing our jobs well but also on always presenting ourselves to the very best of our professional abilities. With this in mind, the following principles of conduct apply to all team members:

Smoking, alcohol and drugs:

- We are a smoke-free school and smoking or vaping is not allowed on the premises. To clarify this means that you may not:
 - Smoke or Vape anywhere in the nursery or within sight of the nursery entrance.
 - Smoke or vape when out of the nursery on an outing with Children present.
 - Smoke or vape in the presence of any of our children.
- Any instances where you are found breaking these rules or where an accusation is made that you have broken these rules will result in immediate investigation and may lead to disciplinary action,
- Alcohol may not be consumed during working hours under any circumstances.
- Team members must not allow the consumption of alcohol or drugs to adversely affect their work performance or official conduct.
- Should there be any suspicion that staff members have consumed alcohol or drugs whilst at work they will be suspended immediately as a neutral act pending investigation
- Any breach of these rules will result in immediate investigation and may result in disciplinary action

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Personal presentation:

- To promote a professional image that enhances the nursery and promotes a positive business image, all team members must maintain a professional, practical and presentable standard of grooming and dress always.
- All team members are required to follow the dress code and wear full uniform where one is required by the nursery. For further information, see individual nursery requirements and the Employee Handbook.

Mobile phones and cameras:

- Team members should be fully aware of and adhere to, the Little Dukes Mobile Phone Policy
- All team members must store their telephones, smart watches and other devices that record or share information in the designated area in the nursery and may not take them into the classrooms.
- Parents/carers are not allowed to use their mobile phones in school and visitors must leave their mobile phone in the school office.

Outside employment:

- Team members may undertake work outside school either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the nursery or affect their work performance. They MUST make their Headteacher aware and seek written permission.
- If approval is granted it is the team members' responsibility to always ensure that the additional employment does not interfere with work performance and that there is no conflict of interest.

Behaviour outside hours of duty:

- Team members must conduct their personal affairs in a manner that does not affect their official duties.
- Team members must be aware that their activity or behaviour outside of working hours could bring the integrity or reputation of the nursery, their own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community into disrepute.
- In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Reputation and social media:

- Team members must be careful to ensure that nothing they say or do brings the nursery's name into disrepute.
- Team members should not gossip or speak inappropriately about the nursery, children, parents/carers, team members, or other Dukes employees including discussing incidents.
- With regards to the use of social media, team members must not post anything on social networking sites that would offend any other team member or parent/carer.
- Team members should be aware that as part of safer recruitment and ongoing suitability head teachers may review their social media content.
- Team members are not permitted to allow parents/carers to view their pages on social networking sites or engage parents/carers in any form of social networking.

Use of official resources:

Employees must:

- Ensure that all resources within their area of responsibility are used effectively and economically.
- Take responsibility to maintain and care for the resources in their areas of responsibility.
- Use facilities and equipment including computers, email, internet access and mobile phones for official purposes only, unless the Headteacher has given permission for limited private use.

Conflict of interest:

Team members must act in the public interest and not in any manner designed to gain unfair advantage for themselves or other individuals, family, friends or business acquaintances. This particularly applies with respect to obtaining contracts or purchasing of goods and services.

Gifts and benefits:

It is important that all team members' actions are able to withstand scrutiny, and not cause any embarrassment to the company, other employees, themselves or any third party, including contractors or suppliers.

Therefore employees must not:

- Seek to accept favours or gifts for services performed in connection with official duties.
- Use their position to encourage or obtain a private benefit.
- Make or accept gifts or payments with ulterior motives in order to obtain favours or in return for favourable services.
- Offer, pay, solicit or accept bribes in any form, including facilitation payments.
- Open themselves up to suspicion of dishonesty or put themselves in a position of conflict between their work and their private interests.
- Give or receive gifts and entertainment as a reward, inducement or encouragement for preferential treatment or inappropriate or dishonest conduct.

- Accept invitations from parents/carers, suppliers or others to hospitality or entertainment events.

In order not to be considered a bribe, gifts and hospitality must not be used to encourage dishonest benefits; therefore, employees are not in breach if gifts/hospitality are given in festive spirit or a reward for good service.

In addition to this, the monetary value of the gifts is irrelevant as long as these are given in good faith with no ulterior motive.

Employees may accept:

- Low-value token gifts produced for the purpose of being given away, if given by an existing customer or supplier
- Occasional boxes of confectionery, etc., given to a team of employees or as an individual gift.

4. Security of information

We protect not just children and ourselves but also the information that we hold. The following applies to all team members:

Confidentiality:

- Team members are expected to treat information they receive about children, parents/carers, team members and the nursery in a discreet and confidential manner.
- Children, parent/carer and employee-related information is confidential. Any information regarding parents/carers, children, employees and/or a service will not be conveyed to another person without appropriate authorisation. All team members must comply with legislative requirements in respect to policies relating to confidentiality and privacy.
- If in any doubt about sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them, team members should seek advice from a senior member of staff. Information should only be shared on a need to know basis
- Confidentiality with respect to business/finance information and security of systems information (Information Technology) will be adhered to by all team members.

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Personal information:

- Employees may collect, use and disclose any personal information that is necessary for the performance of their work or required by law.
- Consent will be obtained from individuals concerned for the use of sensitive information such as racial or ethnic origin, political views, religious beliefs, sexual preferences, or criminal record. Team members must ensure that the information is accurate, complete and up to date.
- Team members must take reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. Each person will be advised that they have a right to access their personal information and seek corrections to it.

For further information please refer to our IT security and GDPR policies.

5. Post-employment conduct

We aim to create long-term relationships with all our employees and pride ourselves on our connectedness with current, returning, and ex-team members. We follow through on our commitments and responsibilities and expect our staff to do the same.

Employment after leaving the nursery:

- Employees commit to maintaining the reputation of the business following employment in their behaviour and communication.
- Confidential information obtained in the course of duty will not be relayed to anyone else. Once a team member has left the nursery, confidential information obtained during employment will not be used to advantage the prospective employer or disadvantage the nursery.

Non solicitation:

Employees will not, for a period of six months following the termination of employment, either personally or by an agent, whether on their own account or in association with any other person, canvass, solicit or endeavour to take away from the nursery the business or custom of any customer of the nursery with whom they have personally dealt.

Non-competition:

Employees will not, for a period of six months after the termination of employment, either personally or by an agent, whether on their own account or in association with any other person, engage in business with or be in any way interested in any company, firm or organisation within the local area that engages in or carries on the business of Nursery provision.