



## STAFF CONDUCT POLICY

Reviewed policy agreed by GB on:	Autumn 2021
Reviewed policy shared with staff on:	Autumn 2021
Policy to be reviewed again on:	Autumn 2024
Committee responsible for review:	Policy Committee



# Willow Dene School

Professional Guide









# Exemplary Professionalism

At the heart of a vision for all

Willow Dene is a school with a focus on the future. Our values underpin all that we do and ensure that we focus on the possibilities for learning within the context of our ambitions for all. We constantly seek to challenge consensus and overcome barriers to learning that many consider to be permanent features of our children's lives. It is these principles that underpin our vision:

*'Seeing possibilities, realising dreams'.*

To achieve our vision, we promote and demand the highest levels of professionalism from every adult who works in or with our school. We are committed to ensuring the professional learning of everyone is central to our drive for change and, in return, expect the very highest level of professional attitudes and behaviours; nothing less than this will do.

We understand that in a school that is focused very much around the effectiveness of teams of varying types, this will involve problem solving, flexibility, understanding, negotiation and altruistic mind-sets. The focus, always, must be on the child.

This booklet contains the principles, procedures and processes that underpin our commitment to achieving the very highest possible standards of professionalism. It contains the commitments we make to the professional development of our teams as well as the expectations we have of everyone that works in our school.



# Visions and Values

RESPECT, TRUST, FORGIVENESS, POSITIVITY, CO-OPERATION,  
HONESTY, PATIENCE, FREEDOM, THOUGHTFULNESS,  
HAPPINESS, COURAGE, ASPIRATION

At Willow Dene our values and vision underpin our aspirations for our children so that they can achieve their full potential. This is realised through your wholehearted commitment to the vital role that you play as part of a dedicated team of professionals.

Our vision and values permeate throughout every activity, opportunity and interaction within the Willow Dene school day and are demonstrated in everything you do and say.

As a teaching assistant it is your continual hard work and commitment along with the rest of the school community, that enables us to realise the vision that drives the school forward and ensures its continual success.

Our vision is found in the school's core priorities, action plans and strategic aims and it is your responsibility to ensure that you have a thorough understanding of your role in promoting and facilitating the realisation of the school's vision.



As a teaching assistant at Willow Dene we actively encourage you to develop and live our vision and values for the school. In turn there is a commitment to enable and empower you to give your very best, to share ideas and suggestions and to give honest, constructive feedback in a professional manner.









# Expectations



Your commitment to punctuality will be demonstrated throughout the day. You will be at school and ready to start work by 9am and return from any breaks promptly. In doing so, you ensure that children receive the maximum amount of support and attention possible.

There is an expectation that you seek positive solutions to difficulties if or when they arise and that you use appropriate channels to report any concerns.

Your commitment to professionalism and to the safety and well-being of our children will ensure that you are familiar with, and adhere to, the school dress code.

We treat our children with respect and dignity at all times. You will be attentive to the children's needs and find the right balance between providing or offering help and promoting independence.

You will show sensitivity to children's comfort needs and ensure that 'pupil voice' is heard and always responded to.

Your cheerful and professional manner in all your interactions with children and adults will demonstrate your positive ethos. Your careful use of language will reflect your commitment to developing and maintaining harmonious relationships.

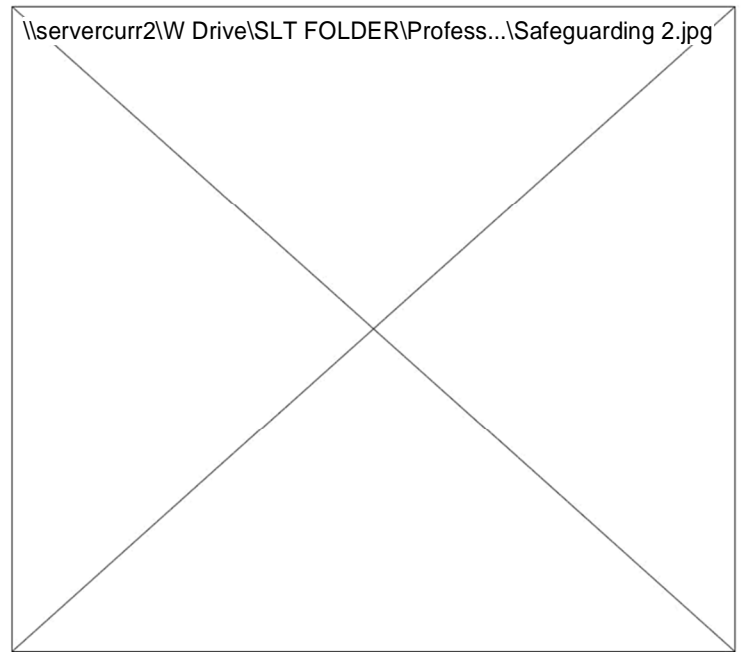
Your role is to support the class teacher in delivering personalised learning by making sure that you have an understanding of each child's individual needs and priorities including communication, mobility, behaviour, self-care and learning.



# Safeguarding

At Willow Dene the safeguarding of children is paramount. Because of this we:

- respect confidences about our children and their families and share information only on a 'need to know' basis
- are vigilant at all times in ensuring that the environment is safe, stimulating and appropriate to meeting the needs of our pupils
- accept personal responsibility to challenge any colleague whose practice appears to compromise our high standards
- are extremely vigilant about children's safety and report any concerns immediately to the appropriate person
- store mobile phones in lockers away from the classroom at the beginning of the school day and use them only in the staff room or outside the school gate whilst children are on site
- never take photos of children on personal equipment











# Equality

At Willow Dene we foster an ethos of equality and justice in every aspect of school life.

Every staff member is expected to be a positive role model who upholds an ethos of acceptance and collaboration. We acknowledge and celebrate difference and promote honest and transparent discussion if and when the potential for conflict arises.



## Use of Social Media

There is an expectation that if staff members use social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.) it is strictly for personal use only. There must be no reference to Willow Dene School or its partners - this includes comments about events, colleagues, children, families and related matters





# Teamwork

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

Helen Keller

We are committed to providing a safe and compelling learning environment for our children. Teaching Assistants work in/with teams and commit to this common purpose.

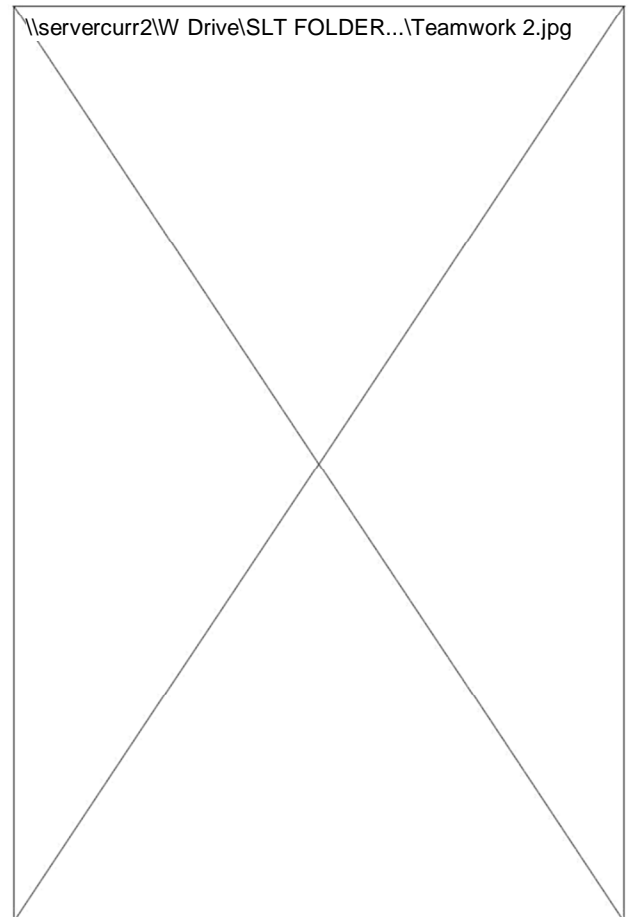
The class teacher is the team leader. You support the class teacher by working under his/her direction and ensuring that the whole team facilitates the very best learning experiences and opportunities for every child.

Successful teamwork enables us to realise our collective goals. Every team member has a responsibility to work effectively with others in pursuit of excellence.

In practice every team member commits to:

- sharing ideas and problem-solving together
- sharing strengths and seeking support for their own development
- supporting others to develop their skills
- being flexible and adaptable
- recognising and valuing the roles of their colleagues
- addressing and resolving conflict

Effective team-working promotes an ethos of support, challenge and mutual respect. This will have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. A team that successfully supports its members is also effective in identifying and meeting the needs of children.









# Working with Families

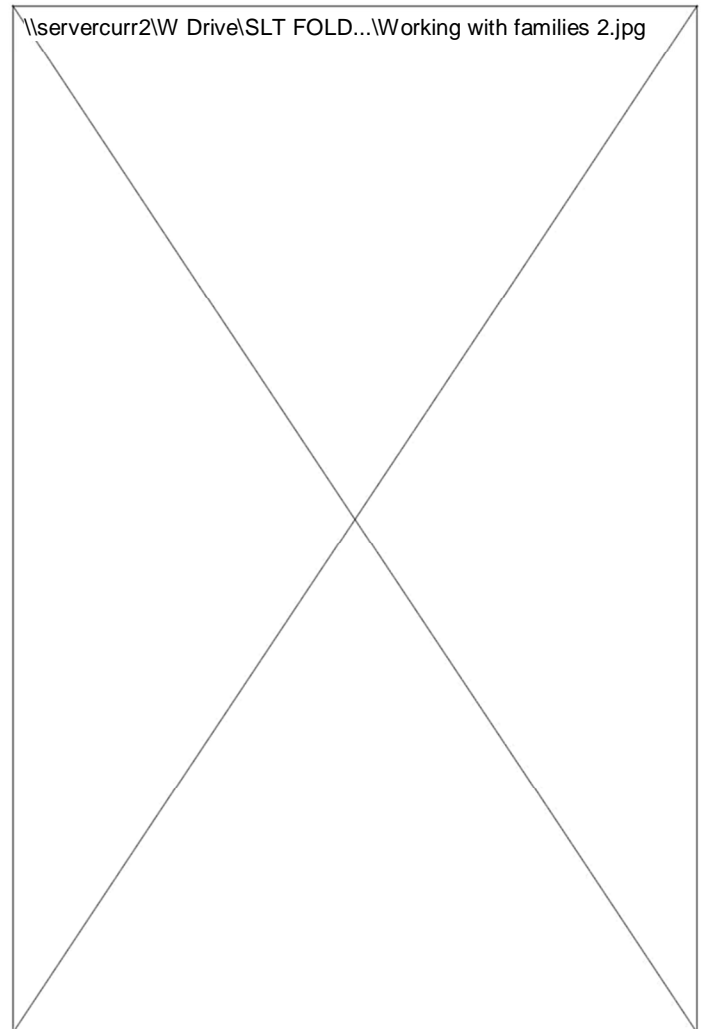
Children and their families are at the centre of everything we do. We work in true partnership with parents and carers by listening to and respecting what they tell us. When we do this successfully we enable learning to be transferred between school and home.

Many of our children have had a difficult start in life and families may need a high level of support to manage both their children's needs and their home lives. Our collective role is to support and enable families by providing as much advice and information as we can to improve children's outcomes.

We are committed to frequent contact using the most appropriate communication methods available for individual families. We look for children's strengths, share areas of progress and highlight the positive aspects of the children's school life. We are never judgemental.

Parents and families are always welcome to visit Willow Dene. We make them welcome and always make time to talk. We are sensitive about issues that parents might find difficult and carefully plan our conversations if/when these issues arise.

Parents entrust us with their children; they are confident that they are treated with dignity and respect and that they are safe when they are with us. We demonstrate the way in which we value our children through the attention we pay to the smallest detail, providing the highest quality of care and through the respect we show to each child's belongings. Children always go home looking clean and well-cared for.





# Working with Other Professionals

To provide the best school experience for our children we work in collaboration with a wide team of professionals, both school-based and from other settings.

We expect you, as a Teaching Assistant, to know who the professionals are that are involved with the children you work with. You will make sure you are familiar with what they do and the support they provide.

You recognise other professionals as experts in their field and listen to and respect their professional opinions, you are honest and open in discussions about individual children and share and follow guidance given.

You are a reflective practitioner, continually assessing children's progress and using your knowledge to utilise the expertise of professionals, seeking support and advice when needed and consequently attaining the best outcomes for our children.



At Willow Dene we support professionals to work with children in class or in a variety of specialist learning environments when appropriate, in addition to this you may be expected to accompany children to on-site medicals or school based clinics. In all situations there is an expectation that you are able to share or feed back relevant information with the relevant people.

Our teaching assistants are continually learning from these skilled practitioners. This enables them to work directly on children's personalised programmes and implement recommendations, ensuring that children are accessing specialist advice frequently and in familiar environments with adults they know.









# Understanding of Children's Learning

Every staff member has a shared responsibility for understanding, promoting and developing children's learning in the most holistic sense. This includes supporting children to communicate effectively, to manage their own behaviour, to develop physical skills and to become as independent as possible, alongside learning focused on core and enrichment areas of the curriculum.

Within your role, you should:

- Strive to ensure that children are provided with interactions, skills and understanding which promote greater independence across the school day
- Recognise the learning opportunities available in any situation, from playtimes, hygiene routines and lunchtimes, to group and individual learning tasks (and everything in between)
- Constantly evaluate what you are doing and seek to understand the importance of every interaction or decision you make about the children
- Make learning irresistible through imaginative, exciting and innovative opportunities
- Recognise when and how to harness the opportunities that new technologies offer and ensure it is used purposefully to support exploration or targeted adult-led learning
- Be responsible for providing exceptional learning opportunities for each individual child - be adaptive and responsive to children's immediate needs and responses as well as a focus on longer term goals and aims





# Assessment for Learning

It is essential that all staff are able to contribute to the assessment process, both in terms of the ways in which they respond to children as they learn and in providing accurate information about children's learning to the teacher.

To support assessment, you should:

- Focus on what the child can already do, their next steps and how you can support them to achieve these.
- Have a solid understanding of child development which can be applied to meet individual needs, and to further your own understanding and skills.
- Provide high quality feedback about how children have responded to learning opportunities, any difficulties they might be having and contribute to ideas about next steps in learning.
- Develop an understanding of the relevant elements of 'Learning Journeys' and how these relate to the children in the class.









# Commitment to Professional Learning

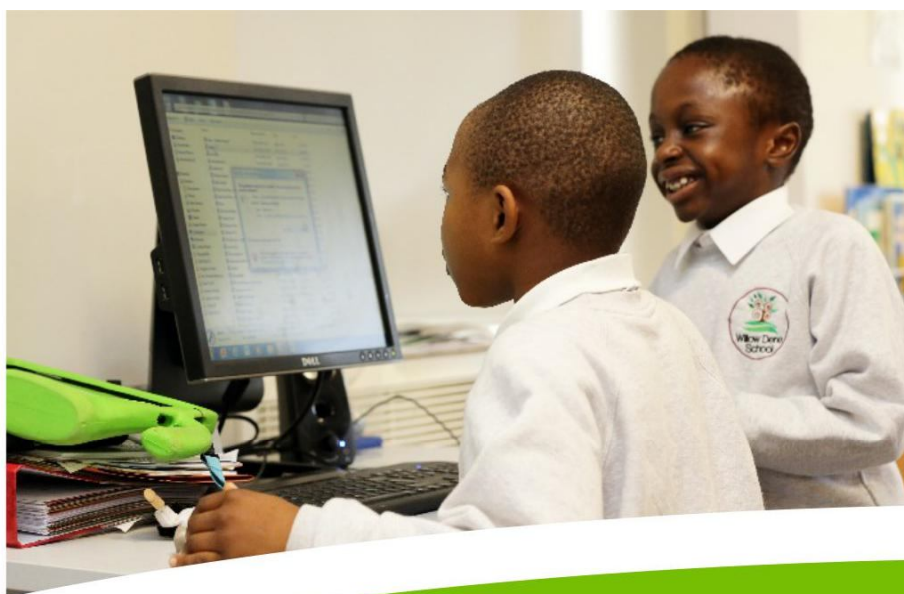
At Willow Dene we believe that our children deserve the very best. This is reflected in the quality of every individual contribution and in the work of the staff team as a whole.

We implement robust recruitment procedures and make careful decisions about who will join us on this exciting learning journey with our children. By accepting this privileged invitation to travel with us, you will have committed to ensuring that your practice is exemplary. You are a valuable resource - we actively promote an ethos of enthusiasm for self-improvement and high quality day-to-day practice.

As an individual member of the workforce at Willow Dene you have a vital contribution to make. We will work with you to develop an accurate and realistic view of your own strengths and areas for improvement. We will work closely with you to ensure that your skills are recognised, developed and shared. We are committed to providing a relevant, focused and effective programme of professional learning that will address your areas for development and empower you to carry out your role to the very highest of standards. In return we expect you to grasp every opportunity to improve and develop with commitment and enthusiasm. You will take a personal interest in, and responsibility for your own professional development.

As you gain experience and expertise in working in this unique environment and with our amazing children, you will support others to develop and grow.

You will be held to account for your performance as a member of the support staff team. You will engage fully with the appraisal process through which we will celebrate your successes, identify areas for improvement and set annual targets against which your performance will be measured. We will address any serious shortfalls robustly by invoking the disciplinary policy.





'With the help and support of the staff at Willow Dene School, our son has grown into a confident, very chatty and loving young man, we are extremely proud of him and all he has achieved.'



'Under the expert and nurturing guidance at Willow Dene my daughter has achieved so much more than anyone thought possible, and overcome challenges with trademark determination, resilience and the most amazing good humour and charm. I am immensely proud of the young woman she has become during her time at Willow Dene.'

