

Code of Conduct

Academic Year 2025-2026



CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR EMPLOYEES AND WORKERS IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS, PRUs, ACADEMIES AND OTHERS

<u>**CONTENTS**</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. CORE PRINCIPLES	4
3. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5
4. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION	5
4.1 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES	
4.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS	
4.3 REPORTING CONCERNS	
4.4 LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS	
5. WORKING WITH OTHERS	7
6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	8
7. HEALTH AND SAFETY	8
7.1 VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION	
7.2 SMOKING, VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES	
8. GENERAL WORKING STANDARDS	9
8.1 ATTENDANCE AND TIMEKEEPING	
8.2 APPEARANCE AND DRESS	
8.3 WORK-RELATED SOCIAL EVENTS	
8.4 CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK	
8.5 DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CHARGES, ARREST OR INVESTIGATION	
8.6 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	
8.7 POLITICAL ACTIVITY	
8.8 REFERENCES	
8.9 DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY	
9. ACTING WITH HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY	12
9.1 SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS INTERESTS	
9.2 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY	
9.3 BRIBERY	
9.4 WHISTLEBLOWING	
10. ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY	13
10.1 COMPUTER USE	
10.2 SOCIAL MEDIA	
10.3 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	
10.4 PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDED IMAGES	
10.5 INTERNET USE	
10.6 AUDIO RECORDINGS	
10.7 PERSONAL MOBILE PHONES	
11. DEFINITIONS	16
11.1 MISCONDUCT	
11.2 GROSS MISCONDUCT	

APPENDICES (Acceptable Use Agreement Appendix 1)



Connect Education Trust

We are Connect. A leading Multi-Academy Trust creating remarkable futures for thousands of pupils through educational excellence. With seven schools, 500 staff, and over 3,250 pupils under our care, we are proud to be making a difference to the communities we serve.

We firmly believe that we are better together, and the collective experience of our staff team and our individual communities allows us to achieve far more than we ever could alone.

Connect schools offer exceptional education to our pupils. A place where pupils and staff team alike enjoy coming to school and where their full potential is realised.

Our Core Vision

To empower children to lead remarkable futures

Our Core Mission

To connect with our pupils and offer them an exceptional education. Recruiting inspirational and committed teachers and school leaders to empower each and every one of the children in our care.

Our Trust Core Values

We Care

It's our calling to protect and grow our pupils and our staff. We work in a world where empathy, thoughtfulness and personal responsibility are absolutely essential.

We Empower

Pupils and staff are equipped and encouraged to be the best that they can be. We give our people the skills and the confidence they need to succeed.

We Create

We get things done, through hard work, resilience and high energy. We dream big and imagine bold new ways to shape the future of learning.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

We are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment where every pupil, employee, and visitor feels valued and supported. Our Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected within our community and serves as a foundation for promoting positive relationships, personal responsibility, and academic excellence.

We believe that a strong Trust and school culture is built on mutual respect, integrity, and accountability. The Code applies to all employees, workers, agency employees, contractors and volunteers and is designed to ensure that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities.

This code defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, helping employees understand what is expected of them professionally and personally. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, including disciplinary, safeguarding, whistleblowing policies and bullying and harassment. We expect all members of our community to uphold these principles both within the school and in any activity connected to it.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which could include, but is not limited to, dismissal. Where concerns arise, we will address them constructively and in line with our policies, ensuring fairness and consistency for all.

In addition to this policy, anyone employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are legally required to comply with the Teachers' Standards (2012). Specifically, in relation to this policy, Teachers must uphold the expectations outlined in Part 2: Personal and Professional Conduct of the Standards.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2. Core Principles

The Code of Conduct is grounded in a shared commitment to uphold the highest standards of behaviour, professionalism, and mutual respect. These principles guide how we interact, support one another, and contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment.

We expect all employees to:

- Take responsibility for their actions and decisions and uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.
- Act as role models, demonstrating integrity, kindness, and responsibility in all interactions, setting a positive example for pupils through their words and actions.
- Familiarise themselves with Trust and school policies and procedures and follow the frameworks that support our Trust and school values, including safeguarding, disciplinary, attendance, and equality policies.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, valuing diversity, promoting inclusion, and ensuring that all individuals feel seen, heard, and respected regardless of background or identity.
- Recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Remain vigilant, report concerns appropriately, and act in the best interests of children and young people at all times.
- Act with integrity: staying honest, transparent, professional, and fair in all we do.
- Speak up when something doesn't feel right. Raising concerns helps us keep our school safe and accountable.

- Seek guidance from their manager, SLT or an appropriate person if they are ever unsure about a situation.

3. Compliance and Accountability

We may, from time to time, ask you to read this Code of Conduct and confirm you understand its contents, and the related policies it refers to. This is a mandatory requirement and helps ensure clarity on expected standards and reinforces our shared commitment to professional behaviour.

We may ask all employees to confirm, on a regular basis, that their criminal record status is unchanged, that there are no investigations or charges pending, and that they are not disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.

4. Safeguarding and Child Protection

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. This commitment is central to everything we do and is reflected in our policies, procedures, and daily practice.

Safeguarding is a duty shared by every member of our Trust and school community, and you must carry out your duties in line with our safeguarding policy and practices, and the statutory guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

All employees must:

- Ensure they are familiar with, and follow, our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Complete all required safeguarding training and refresh their knowledge regularly.
- Ensure sensitive or private information about children must be always kept confidential and only shared when it is in the interests of the pupil to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil concerned.
- Maintain a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability.
- Read and familiarise themselves with Part One or Appendix A of Keeping Children Safe in Education as directed.
- Cooperate fully with any internal or external investigations into allegations related to safeguarding or harm to a pupil.

4.1 Professional Boundaries

All employees must always uphold appropriate professional boundaries. Interactions with pupils should be grounded in respect, support, and a focus on learning and wellbeing. You must not engage in behaviour that could be interpreted as overly familiar, intimate, or suggestive. This includes physical gestures, language, or actions that may be misinterpreted or compromise trust.

All communication with pupils must take place through our approved channels. Employees must use professional language and tone at all times and avoid informal or personal exchanges.

You must not share personal contact details with pupils or communicate with them via personal social media accounts. Any digital interaction must comply with our safeguarding and ICT policies.

Where one-to-one work with a pupil is necessary, it must be planned and conducted in a way that maintains professional boundaries and safeguards both the pupil and the employee. This helps ensure transparency and protects both pupils and employees.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for any adult in a position of trust to engage in a sexual relationship with a pupil under 18, even if consensual. Employees must maintain professional distance and understand the disciplinary and legal consequences of any breach.

Pupils may, on occasion, express, or potentially have romantic or sexual feelings towards employees. This must be taken seriously, and you must ensure that no encouragement is given to the pupil. Anyone who becomes aware that a child is developing any feelings towards an adult should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Headteacher, DSL, or an appropriate leader so action can be taken.

Personal property that is illegal, sexually explicit, or otherwise unsuitable for a school environment must not be brought onto or stored on school premises. This includes material that could reasonably be considered harmful to pupils or employees in the context of safeguarding.

4.2 Relationships with Pupils

Full details of our approach to relationships are detailed in our Close Relationships at Work policy.

All employees are expected to maintain professional, supportive, and respectful relationships with pupils. Every interaction should prioritise the welfare, safety, and dignity of the child. Employees must never exploit their position of trust, nor engage in behaviour that could be perceived as inappropriate, coercive, or sexual in nature.

Relationships with pupils should remain professional at all times, both on school premises and during off-site activities, including online communication.

Physical contact with pupils should only occur, when necessary, appropriate, and in accordance with our guidance. Employees must avoid unnecessary or intimate touch and must never use physical contact to express anger, frustration, or favouritism.

Communication with pupils must always be professional, respectful, and transparent. Employees must use only authorised methods for messaging, email, or online platforms. Personal contact details must not be shared, and employees must not interact with pupils through personal social media accounts.

Language, tone, and content must always be appropriate, and employees must never share personal information or engage in private communications that could compromise professional boundaries.

Employees who have a child enrolled at the school must maintain the same professional standards as with any other pupil. Employees must avoid any appearance of favouritism or preferential treatment and ensure that their child's participation in school activities, assessments, or disciplinary matters is conducted in line with school policies.

You need to let us know of any existing personal connections with pupils, such as those related to you, family friends, or other personal connections outside of school such as sports clubs or faith groups. This may be appropriate to prevent a safeguarding concern, conflict of interest, or risk of perceived favouritism.

4.3 Reporting Concerns

We all have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

Employees must remain alert to signs that may indicate a pupil is experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation, or emotional distress. This includes changes in appearance, behaviour, engagement, or communication.

You must report any concerns you have that a child may be at risk of harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay. If the concern is regarding the Headteacher the matter should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

Each school has their own DSL and Deputy DSL. Please see the safeguarding policy or the safeguarding posters around the school to confirm the name of post holders.

You should not discuss allegations with colleagues or attempt to address the issue yourself. You must not promise confidentiality to a pupil. You must make clear that any information they disclose may need to be shared to keep them safe.

Full details of how to report concerns are set out in our Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy / Other.

4.4 Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is behaviour inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, but which does not meet the threshold of harm as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. It includes safeguarding concerns. Examples of inappropriate conduct that is likely to be a low-level concern includes:

- Being overly familiar with pupils.
- Showing favouritism or blurred professional boundaries.
- Taking informal or unauthorised photographs of pupils.
- Swearing or using inappropriate, intimidating or sexualised language

All low-level concerns must be reported promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately to allow a proportionate response, and reduce the risk of misunderstanding or harm.

5. Working with Others

We are committed to delivering a high-quality education and maintaining a culture of dignity, fairness, and professionalism.

All interactions with colleagues, students, parents, and visitors should reflect integrity, courtesy, and fairness, recognising and valuing differences in experience, perspective, and background. Respectful communication and active listening are essential to maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace.

Employees are encouraged to work cooperatively with colleagues, share knowledge and resources, and contribute positively to team initiatives. Supporting one another and engaging constructively in professional discussions helps build a strong, effective, and cohesive Trust and school community.

Conflict is natural in any workplace, but it must be addressed professionally. Employees should handle disagreements calmly, respectfully, and privately whenever possible, seeking guidance or mediation from leadership if resolution cannot be reached independently. Physical, verbal, or online aggression is unacceptable under any circumstances.

Each employee is accountable for their actions and their impact on the school community. Acting responsibly, maintaining professional boundaries, and modelling positive behaviour sets the standard for pupils and colleagues.

6. Equality and Diversity

Every member of the Trust and school community must be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, regardless of their background, identity, or personal circumstances. Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of any kind will not be tolerated.

Employees are expected to actively support an inclusive environment by challenging bias and prejudice, fostering mutual respect, and ensuring that all individuals feel safe and valued.

Our policies and practices reflect our legal duties under the Equality Act (2010) and its broader commitment to equity and social justice. All employees must uphold these principles in their conduct, decision-making, and interactions, both within the school and in the wider community.

All employees are expected to uphold the principle of equal opportunities in their daily work and interactions. This means treating all students, colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders fairly and without bias.

Decisions relating to recruitment, promotion, allocation of responsibilities, training, and other professional matters must be based on merit, skills, and performance, not on personal characteristics. Employees must avoid favouritism, discrimination, or preferential treatment of any kind.

7. Health and Safety

As an employer, we have a legal duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of our employees. In addition, all employees must take reasonable steps to protect their own health and safety and that of pupils and other people who may be affected by their actions at work.

We are committed to fostering wellbeing, preventing harm, and promoting a positive culture where safety, workload, and mental health are openly discussed and managed.

You must:

- Comply with our health and safety policies, procedures, and risk assessments, and any with statutory health and safety requirements, at all times, including emergency and evacuation protocols.
- Report any hazards, accidents, or unsafe practices promptly to the appropriate manager.
- You must use school equipment, machinery, and resources safely and only for their intended purposes.
- Act safely and responsibly at all times, avoiding behaviour that could cause harm or risk to yourself or others.
- Comply with all instructions relating to health and safety and security procedures.
- Comply with any hygiene requirements we reasonably implement.
- Let us know, in confidence, about any health condition that could affect your ability to carry out your role safely. This information will be used only to meet our legal obligations and support you at work and we do not require the disclosure of unrelated personal health information.

- Inform us of any work you do which takes your total working hours above 48 hours per week.

7.1 Violence and Aggression

Violence, threats, or intimidation of any kind will not be tolerated. All incidents must be reported promptly, and affected employees will be supported appropriately.

7.2 Smoking, Vaping and e-Cigarettes

You must not smoke, vape, or use e-cigarettes or chewing tobacco on school premises, in school buildings, or in areas where pupils are present. This includes indoor and outdoor areas, car parks, vehicles used for school activities, and during school trips.

Smoking should not occur near school entrances or exits, or in any location where it may be reasonably observed by pupils, parents, or members of the public associated with the Trust and school. Outside of working hours, we ask employees to exercise discretion when smoking off site to maintain professionalism and uphold the Trust and school's reputation.

There is no specific entitlement to smoking breaks in the working day. During authorised breaks employees may leave the site to smoke or vape in line with this policy.

7.3 Drugs and Alcohol

You must not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on school premises or during school activities. Where concerns arise, they will be managed under the relevant policy to ensure safety and, where appropriate, support recovery.

8. General Working Standards

Personal standards of general behaviour must be high when working or dealing with colleagues, pupils, parents, members of our community or members of the public.

8.1 Attendance and Timekeeping

Consistent attendance and punctuality are essential to maintaining a high-functioning, supportive environment. All employees play a vital role in modelling reliability and professionalism for pupils and colleagues alike.

You must:

- Attend work regularly and punctually, in accordance with your contracted hours and start and finishing times.
- Be ready to begin work at the designated start time.
- Follow our procedures for reporting lateness.
- Follow all policies and procedures related to your absence from work for any reason, providing relevant documentation where required.
- Request leave in advance, except in emergency situations, and in line with our policies.
- Record working hours accurately if working on a relief or timesheet basis.
- Ensure you take any breaks in line with our practices.

Employees are expected to schedule routine medical and dental appointments outside of working hours wherever possible. We recognise that this may not always be feasible, and in such cases, appointments should be arranged to minimise disruption to work commitments. Advance notice should be provided when appointments during working hours are unavoidable.

8.2 Appearance and Dress

You should maintain a standard of dress that reflects professionalism, respect, and our values. This applies equally during on-site work and online.

Dress should be appropriate to role, setting, and duties, and should not cause embarrassment or discomfort to others.

We respect individual choice and will make reasonable adjustments for disability and accommodate religious and cultural expression. No one will be treated less favourably because of clothing choices linked to faith, gender identity, or disability.

8.3 Work-related Social Events

Work-related social events, whether held on or off our premises, are considered an extension of the workplace.

All employees and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, inclusive, and professional manner throughout these events. Respect for colleagues, pupils, and the wider community is essential, and employees should avoid any conduct that could undermine trust, compromise safeguarding responsibilities, or damage your, or our, reputation.

At events where alcohol is served, it must be consumed responsibly. Intoxication that leads to unsafe, disruptive, or unprofessional behaviour will not be tolerated.

If a concern arises during a social event, you are encouraged to report it as soon as possible to an appropriate manager. All reports will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with our policies and procedures.

8.4 Conduct Outside of Work

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds our reputation and values, even when outside of the workplace. While personal time is respected, behaviour that has a direct impact on colleagues, our workplace, or our reputation may be subject to review and action under this Code of Conduct.

Any behaviour that raises doubts about your suitability to work with children, including actions outside the workplace, whether or not children are involved, will be considered unacceptable.

8.5 Disclosure of Criminal Charges, Arrest or Investigation

Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage their or our reputation.

All employees are required to disclose if they are arrested, charged with a criminal offence, are cautioned or receive a conviction. This includes any investigations to which you are subject or legal proceedings that could raise concerns about your professional conduct or the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

Timely disclosure allows us to assess any potential risks and determine what temporary adjustments, support, or other measures are necessary.

This disclosure is required regardless of whether the matter results in a conviction or your innocence or guilt.

Reporting an arrest or charge will not automatically result in disciplinary action. We will engage with you to consider if this requires any adjustments, damages confidence in or makes you unsuitable to carry out your duties.

Failure to disclose relevant matters may be treated as a serious breach of trust or a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

8.6 Personal Relationships

Full details of our approach to relationships are detailed in our Close Relationships at Work policy.

Employees must ensure that personal relationships at work do not influence behaviour, decision-making, or create conflicts of interest.

Any relationship that exists, or develops, which could lead to a perceived or actual conflict should be declared on a register of business interest that is held centrally and by the senior leader of the Trust.

Disclosure will not automatically result in restrictions but allows us to make any necessary adjustments to duties, management lines, or supervision arrangements to prevent conflicts and uphold a safe, respectful, and professional workplace.

8.7 Political activity

Employees have the right to personal beliefs and opinions but must maintain impartiality and public confidence in the Trust and school's work. Political or controversial discussions should be approached objectively and in line with curriculum or professional duties.

Employees must avoid promoting personal beliefs, campaigning, or using the Trust or school's name or resources for political purposes.

8.8 References

Professional references we give will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. If you do not have this explicit authority, you may not give professional references on our behalf.

You may give personal or character references however you must make it clear that this is given in your capacity as an individual and not on our behalf. Such a reference must not relate solely to their work performance, must not be on our headed paper, and must not be sent from your work email address.

8.9 Data Protection and Confidentiality

All employees are required to handle personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Trust's data protection policies. This includes pupil records, employee information, and any other identifiable or sensitive data.

Employees must only access data that is necessary for their role and must ensure it is stored securely, whether in digital or paper form.

Personal data must not be shared via unsecured channels such as personal email or messaging apps, nor stored on personal devices.

Employees must take particular care when working remotely or using cloud-based tools, ensuring that any platform used is approved and compliant with Trust policy.

Any suspected data breach or concern must be reported immediately to the Trust Data Protection Officer or designated lead.

9. Acting with Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility

We expect and trust all employees to be scrupulously honest in their work. Colleagues, pupils, parents and the public in general are entitled to have absolute confidence in the trustworthiness and honesty of everyone working at the Trust.

9.1 Secondary Employment and Business Interests

You may carry out other work, paid or voluntary, providing it does not conflict with our interests, breach working time regulations, or affect your performance.

You must tell us about any other work or business interests even if you do not believe that this could conflict with your role. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Private tutoring or child minding, particularly for pupils connected to the school
- Running an education consultancy or training business.
- Working for another school or educational institution.
- Holding a governance or trustee role in another school or education-related organisation.

You must inform us of any work you do which takes your total working hours above 48 hours per week on average so we can ensure that this is considered in line with Working Time Regulations.

Employees must not carry out personal or external work on our premises or using Trust resources, systems, unless explicitly authorised.

Private work must be carried out in your own time and not during your working day.

You must immediately report any allegation of misconduct arising in another role where it could reasonably, or be perceived to, impact your professional responsibilities, safeguarding obligations, or the reputation of the Trust or school.

9.2 Gifts and Hospitality

Gifts and hospitality must be managed carefully to avoid any misunderstanding or conflict of interest.

Any gifts or hospitality offered to you must be declared to the Headteacher or your line manager. A record will be kept of all declared gifts and hospitality in the gift register.

Small, one-off gifts from pupils or parents, such as at the end of term, are generally acceptable and do not need to be declared unless they are likely to be of more than a modest threshold of £25.

Employees must not give personal gifts to pupils, particularly individual pupils, as this may be misinterpreted. Employees should seek SLT advice before giving any whole class gifts, such as a small token at the end of term.

If you're unsure whether a gift is appropriate, seek advice before accepting or giving it and refer to the Gift and Hospitality policy.

9.3 Bribery

Employees must not offer, solicit, or accept bribes or inducements of any kind, whether directly or indirectly.

This includes any gift, payment, favour, or advantage intended to influence a decision, secure preferential treatment, or gain an unfair benefit in connection with their role at the Trust or school.

All employees are expected to act with honesty and integrity, and to avoid any conduct that could be perceived as corrupt or unethical. We have a zero-tolerance approach to bribery.

9.4 Whistleblowing

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or risks to pupils, employees, or the wider school community without fear of reprisal.

Any concerns should be raised through the appropriate channels, in line with the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy, which provides detailed guidance on how to report concerns confidentially and how they will be handled.

This includes issues related to safeguarding, financial irregularities, health and safety, or breaches of professional conduct.

Staff must act in good faith and are protected under whistleblowing legislation when raising genuine concerns.

10. Acceptable Use of Technology

10.1 Computer Use

Trust and School computers, email accounts, and digital systems must be used responsibly and primarily for professional and educational purposes.

Staff must not use Trust or School devices for personal business, unauthorised software, or any activity that could compromise our data security or reputation.

Emails should be written professionally and courteously.

All computers and digital systems are subject to legitimate monitoring in line with GDPR and our data protection policies for purposes such as security and safeguarding.

All digital devices should never be left open and unattended.

All log-ins and passwords must be kept confidential. They must not be given to any other person inside or outside the organisation. No staff member should use someone else's log-in or password without express permission from an appropriate senior leader.

10.2 Social Media

Staff are expected to exercise sound judgment and professionalism when using social media, both within and outside of work. Social media platforms and messaging apps must not be used to share confidential, sensitive, or personally identifiable information about pupils, parents, colleagues, Trust or School operations.

Any online activity that could compromise safeguarding, breach data protection laws, or damage our reputation is strictly prohibited.

Communication with pupils via social media or messaging apps must only occur through approved Trust or School channels and for legitimate educational purposes, with appropriate oversight.

Employees must maintain appropriate boundaries with pupils and should not accept or initiate friend or follow requests from current pupils, or former pupils who are under 18 years old on personal accounts unless there is a family relationship.

For former pupils aged 18 or over, staff may accept or initiate social media connections only where the relationship remains appropriate and does not compromise safeguarding responsibilities or professional integrity.

When former pupils return for events or activities, any communication should remain professional at all times.

Whilst we respect the right of everyone to hold personal beliefs, employees must not post content that could be interpreted as discriminatory, offensive, or otherwise incompatible with their professional role.

Even when using personal accounts, employees should be mindful that their online presence can reflect on the Trust and school. Comments, images, or affiliations that undermine public confidence in the Trust and school or the integrity of their role may lead to disciplinary action. This does not prevent staff from making appropriate whistleblowing disclosures in line with our Whistleblowing Policy, which protects those raising genuine concerns about wrongdoing or risk.

We encourage staff to use privacy settings to limit public access to personal content, but you should not rely on these settings as a safeguard against reputational risk.

10.3 Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to any digital system or tool that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence such as text generation, data analysis, image creation, or automated decision-making. Examples include, but are not limited to, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Copilot and AI-enabled marking or lesson-planning tools.

Only AI tools approved by the Trust may be used for work-related tasks. Staff must read and understand the privacy policies of any AI systems they use. Any AI tool handling pupil data must comply fully with UK data protection legislation and Trust policy.

No personal, confidential, or pupil-identifiable data should be entered into AI tools without authorisation.

Staff should disclose their use of AI when it influences teaching materials, grading, or communication.

Employees must ensure that any use of AI does not compromise pupil safety, privacy, or wellbeing, and must avoid relying on AI for decisions that affect individual pupils without human review and accountability.

When using AI tools to support teaching, learning, or operational tasks, employees must verify the accuracy and appropriateness of outputs before sharing or acting on them.

AI-generated content must not be used to replace professional judgment, especially in areas involving pupil assessment, behaviour management, safeguarding, or pastoral care.

Under no circumstances should employees use publicly accessible AI for any task involving pupil data, school-related documents, our intellectual property, or internal communications. These platforms may not meet the Trust's security, privacy, or compliance requirements and pose a risk to data integrity and confidentiality.

Non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action under the Trust's staff code of conduct or other related policy.

10.4 Photography and Recorded Images

The use of photography and recorded images within the school must be handled with care, professionalism, and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection legislation.

Staff must only take photographs or videos of pupils for legitimate educational, operational, or promotional purposes, and only where appropriate consent has been obtained. This includes consent from parents/carers and, where relevant, pupils themselves. All images captured must be in line with the Trust and School's safeguarding and privacy policies, and the Trust and School retains the copyright to all images captured in the course of your professional duties.

Personal devices must not be used to take or store images of pupils under any circumstances. All recordings must be made using Trust or school approved equipment and stored securely on Trust or school systems. Images must not be shared via personal email, messaging apps, or social media platforms.

Photographs and videos must never be used in a way that could embarrass, exploit, or compromise the dignity of pupils or staff. Employees must remain mindful of context, location, and audience when capturing or sharing images.

Any misuse of photography or recorded images, including unauthorised sharing or storage, may result in disciplinary action and could constitute a breach of safeguarding or data protection regulations.

10.5 Internet Use

Trust/ school devices and internet access are provided for professional and educational purposes. Personal use should be minimal, appropriate, and must not interfere with work duties or breach Trust policies.

Employees must not access or download inappropriate, offensive, or non-work-related content.

All internet activity on Trust systems may be monitored, and misuse may result in disciplinary action.

10.6 Audio Recordings

Employees must not make audio recordings of pupils, colleagues, or school activities without prior authorisation.

All recordings must be for legitimate educational or operational purposes and comply with safeguarding and data protection policies.

Covert recording is strictly prohibited.

Personal devices must not be used for recording unless explicitly approved in advance by a senior leader.

10.7 Personal Mobile Phones

Employees must not use personal mobile phones during working hours, except during designated break times and in employee-only areas.

Use of personal devices in classrooms, corridors, or any pupil-facing areas is strictly prohibited. This ensures professional focus, maintains safeguarding standards, and avoids disruption to learning.

Employees are expected to model appropriate behaviour and maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Where employees are required to use personal mobile phones for work-related tasks, they must seek approval of the Headteacher or line manager.

11. Definitions

11.1 Misconduct

Misconduct is any type of behaviour or conduct that falls below the standard required by us or is in breach of any policy or rule.

Examples of misconduct include:

- Minor breaches of policies.
- Failure to comply with reasonable instructions.
- Poor timekeeping or failure to work contractual hours.
- Unauthorised absence.
- Work not of the required standard, unrelated to capability.
- Disruptive behaviour.
- Inappropriate or offensive behaviour for example foul or abusive language.
- Unauthorised use of property/facilities.
- Failure to take reasonable care of our property or resources.
- Minor breaches of confidential data without authorisation.
- Negligence in the performance of duties.
- Actions leading to a loss of trust and confidence.
- Inappropriate use of social media.
- Smoking or vaping off the school premises in a way that impacts your role or the reputation of the Trust and School.

Each matter will be considered on the facts rather than prescriptively against this list. This is not an exhaustive list.

11.2 Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct refers to serious breaches of conduct that fundamentally undermine the trust and confidence we place in our employees. Such behaviour may result in dismissal without notice, subject to a fair investigation and disciplinary process.

Examples of gross misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual misconduct.
- Inappropriate relationships or failure to maintain appropriate boundaries with pupils.
- Serious breaches of safeguarding or child protection responsibilities.
- Theft, fraud, or deliberate falsification of records.

- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while at work.
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances on school premises.
- Serious insubordination or persistent refusal to carry out reasonable instructions.
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination against pupils, employees, or others.
- Deliberate damage to school property or the property of others.
- Gross negligence.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Serious breach of health and safety regulations.
- Misuse of Trust or school IT systems, including accessing or distributing inappropriate material.
- Bringing the Trust or school into serious disrepute.
- Dishonesty involving anything that relates to life at work.
- Criminal offences or conduct, including those committed outside the workplace, which impact ability or suitability to work in an education setting.
- Smoking, including vaping, or the use of e-cigarettes, in any unauthorised area on our premises.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on our premises or at an event.
- Inappropriate use of our Information Technology including email or internet abuse or and accessing sites containing pornographic, offensive, or obscene material.
- Covertly recording hearings, meetings, or colleagues.
- Harassment, bullying or discrimination against any other person (whether in person or online).
- Unauthorised absence from the workplace.
- Serious breach of trust and confidence.

Each matter will be considered on the facts rather than prescriptively against this list. This is not an exhaustive list.

If there is anything in this Code that you do not understand, you should speak to your Line Manager or the Headteacher/ Chief Executive Officer.

APPENDIX 1

Acceptable Use of AI for Staff

Term	Definition
Shadow IT	The use of IT systems, software, apps, or devices (including browser extensions) inside the school network without explicit approval from the IT technical team.
GDPR Compliant AI	AI tools that have been vetted to ensure they handle personal data according to UK data protection laws. Most "free/public" AI tools are not GDPR compliant by default.
Human in the Loop	The requirement is that a human professional reviews, validates, and takes responsibility for any output or decision generated by an AI tool.
Algorithm Bias	The potential for AI systems to produce unfair or discriminatory results based on the data they were trained on.

Professional Judgement & Human Oversight

- Human in the Loop: I understand that while AI can assist with planning and resource creation, it must not replace my professional judgement.
- Review & Fact-Check: I will review, edit, and fact-check all AI-generated content before using it in the classroom or for administrative tasks.
- Assessment & Reporting: I will not rely solely on AI tools to assess pupil performance or write reports.
- Meaningful Review: Any AI-assisted assessment will be subject to meaningful human review to ensure accuracy and fairness.
- Marking & IP Rules: I will only use AI tools for marking or feedback in accordance with school rules and data protection policies.
- Training Models: I will not upload original pupil work into AI tools if those tools use that data to train their models, unless I have obtained specific consent and confirmed the tool is on the school's approved list.

Data Protection & Privacy

- No Personal Data: I will not enter personal or sensitive data about learners, colleagues, or parents (including names, photos, or specific behavioural incidents) into public, non-GDPR-compliant AI tools.
- Confidentiality: I will treat prompts and inputs into AI models with the same confidentiality as any other school record.

Safeguarding & Vigilance

- Deepfakes & Abuse: I will remain vigilant to the risks of AI-facilitated abuse, including "deepfakes" and AI-based bullying.
- Reporting: I will report any such incidents immediately via existing safeguarding channels.
- Supporting Learners: I will support learners in navigating AI risks, helping them identify misinformation and "hallucinations" in AI outputs.

Role Modelling

- Transparency: When using AI in lessons to demonstrate concepts, I will be transparent with learners about its use, modelling critical thinking and ethical engagement.
- Approved Platforms: I will only use AI platforms and tools that have been approved by the Trust/School technical team to ensure they meet filtering and monitoring standards.
- Shadow IT: I understand that using unapproved software or browser extensions is considered "Shadow IT" and is not permitted.

Compliance & Sanctions

- Failure to comply with this Acceptable Use of AI for Staff policy may be treated as a breach of the Trust Acceptable Use Agreement and may result in disciplinary action in line with Trust policies.