

Staff Code of Conduct

Approved by RET Board

Approved on December 2023

RET contact Headteacher

Revision due Every 2 years



RUSSELL EDUCATION TRUST

1. Purpose

- a. This code of conduct aims to set and help maintain standards of conduct that staff are expected to follow in order to ensure the school environment is a safe, happy and respectful one.
- b. Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on Teacher and Support Staff standards.
- c. This code of conduct is intended to reduce the risk of false or malicious allegations of misconduct by students and parents against staff. It will be appreciated, however, that the code of conduct cannot totally remove that risk.
- d. This code should be read in conjunction with the school's child protection procedures and other relevant Procedures (e.g. Acceptable Use of ICT), with which staff must be familiar.
- e. All staff have an obligation to ensure they are fully familiar with the school's Policies & Procedures, including those setting out appropriate standards of behaviour/conduct. Those found to be deliberately, negligently or carelessly breaching this Code may become the subject of actions under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

2. Legislation and Guidance

- a. In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' we have a staff code of conduct which covers acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/student relationships and communications including the use of social media.

3. General Conduct

- a. Staff will be aware of their professional conduct at all times (including break and lunch time) and in all locations (including the staff room).
- b. Racism, sexism, homophobia and/or any other kind of harassment or bullying is not tolerated and will be dealt with under school procedures.
- c. Staff will not discuss the performance of colleagues or personal details of staff or students except when professionally appropriate and never in public environments (including on social networks or online group chats).
- d. Staff will be available to work in directed time
- e. Staff set an example to students. They will:
 1. Maintain high standards in attendance and punctuality
 2. Not use inappropriate or offensive language in school
 3. Treat students, parents, staff and stakeholders with dignity and respect
 4. Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
 5. Not undermine fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 6. Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits students' vulnerability or might lead to them breaking the law
 7. Understand the statutory frameworks they must work within
 8. Adhere to the teacher and/or support staff standards

4. Safeguarding

- a. Staff have a duty to safeguard children from harm and to report any concerns that they have. Staff will read Key Documents and sign to say they have understood and can execute their duties with regard to

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safeguarding and child protection; currently this is via EVERY. (Key documents include the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure and Keeping Children Safe in Education).

- b. Staff will ensure they know and use the correct processes to refer to the DSL if they have concerns about a child or an adult working with children.
- c. Staff will record exact events in a professional manner on CPOMs within 24 hours of a verbal concern being reported to the DSL.

5. Relationships with Students

- a. The relationship between a member of staff and a student is a formal one, and appropriate professional boundaries must always be maintained.
- b. All employees are expected to behave in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent.
- c. Employees must take care that the age, sex, maturity and cultural background of the students is taken into consideration in their relationships with students.
- d. Employees must be alert to the possibility that students may misinterpret, deliberately or innocently, adult behaviour or language and must be vigilant in this respect. Excessively informal or ambiguous language, or behaviour which may be interpreted as intimidatory or physically threatening must be avoided. Sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students, and haranguing and aggressive shouting are abusive and therefore unacceptable.

6. Physical Contact

- a. Any circumstance where physical contact is used increases the vulnerability of the member of staff. Physical contact is rarely appropriate or acceptable and must be avoided. It may, exceptionally, be appropriate for a member of staff to use physical restraint or intervention in order to prevent a student causing injury or harm to him/herself or others or damaging property. This must always be the minimum force required and the incident must always be reported immediately.
- b. Teachers of subjects where physical contact may occasionally be necessary, such as physical education or drama, must endeavour to demonstrate particular techniques by using competent students. Where the teacher uses physical contact, the contact must be planned and explained to students and must be demonstrably unavoidable.
- c. Physical contact may be necessary where there is a life threatening or serious condition. Employees who administer first aid must ensure that, wherever possible, other children or another adult are present.

7. Corporal Punishment

- a. The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation. This includes interference with a student's body or clothes, for example, shaking or holding the student by the lapels of his or her jacket.

8. Students with Special Educational Needs

- a. All staff must be familiar with the special educational needs of students they are working with and strategies to support the child. This information can be found in personal profiles currently on Edukey.
- b. Employees must seek specific guidance from their line manager in relation to students with special needs who require assistance with personal needs such as toileting.

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9. Private Meetings

- a. Private meetings with students should be avoided. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable, then it must take place in an appropriate room with the door left open and/or with visual contact with others maintained. The use of 'Meeting in Progress' signs is inappropriate.
- b. Under no circumstances should meetings with individual students be arranged off the school premises, or on the school premises when the school is not in session, without the prior approval of the headteacher or a senior colleague with delegated authority to approve such meetings. This includes the transporting of individual children in private cars.
- c. Students must only be transported in private cars with the express permission and knowledge of the headteacher (or senior colleague with delegated authority) and then only with another student or member of staff also in the vehicle.

10. Electronic and other Communications (for more information consult the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy)

- a. Under no circumstances should students or parents be given personal contact details for staff including home or mobile telephone numbers, personal email addresses or online identities such as social media accounts. A school email account can be used but the communication must meet the usual standards expected of school communications.
- b. Staff will not use computers or phones to send, copy, search or display offensive images, messages or racist, sexist, sexual, homophobic, or anti-social material.
- c. The school has and uses the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
- d. In general the use of home or mobile telephones for communication with students or parents should be avoided but if absolutely necessary then the facility to withhold your number (e.g. 141) must be used. It is not possible to withhold the number in a text message so these must not be used unless through school systems.
- e. The use of personal social networking sites, and other similar forms of communication such as personal blogs, is not permitted in school and/or using school equipment.
- f. All staff are expected, when using such social media or posting publicly on the Internet out of school for their personal use, to do everything reasonable to protect both the reputation of the school and members of its community, and to safeguard its students. They must be particularly mindful that students of the school as well as parents may see those posts or be members of the same groups and conduct themselves accordingly. If they have any concerns about matters arising from Internet and social media activity then they should seek advice from the school at the earliest opportunity. For further information readers are directed to the school's Policy on the Acceptable Use of ICT.
- g. Staff will not attempt to contact students or their parents via social media or any other means outside the school in order to develop any sort of relationship.
- h. If a staff member has parents of students at the school as contacts on social media (e.g. through other social connections that they or their children have, they will be especially mindful not to post about the school, the staff or the students save for appropriate organisational arrangements. In such out of school arrangements, staff must never communicate directly with students.
- i. If a staff member is a parent of a child at the school then they may belong to relevant social media groups e.g. year-based WhatsApp groups again being mindful that they may be exposing their contact details and that any posts they make will be more significant to other members of the group.
- j. If staff see inappropriate comments on any forum this should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

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- k. Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students at the school without parental consent. Staff will never post student images in their personal online accounts.
- l. Staff will be aware that Keeping Children Safe in Education requires school recruitment measures to include Internet and social media searches of prospective candidates. Staff will be aware of their 'digital footprint' and how this can affect employment status.

11. Honesty and Integrity

- a. Staff will maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with students, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.
- b. Staff will ensure that all personal information they supply to the school is correct. This will include; background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside school, qualifications, professional experience).
- c. Where there are any updates (or changes in circumstances) to any information provided to the school, the staff member will update this information as soon as is reasonably practicable. This includes arrests, cautions and/or convictions. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on employment.
- d. Gifts that are worth more than £30 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register (see Gifts and Hospitality Policy). When consideration is being given to accepting a gift, both by the individual and by the school, the possible perception of accepting it must be considered.

12. Infatuations and Crushes

- a. Infatuations and crushes can involve students and staff. A member of staff in, or concerned about, such a situation must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The situation must be taken seriously and the member of staff must be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. Careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations. Younger teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation.

13. Out-of-School and After-School Activities

- a. Staff must take particular care when supervising students, especially older students, in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting, school holiday or out-of-school activity. The more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities can be misinterpreted by young people.
- b. Similar considerations must be given to any informal contact with students in any context outside or away from those organised by the school.
- c. The standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of staff in both of these circumstances are no different to those which apply when the school is in session.
- d. When not at work, staff will not act in a way that would bring the school or the teaching/support staff profession into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences such as violent or sexual misconduct as well as negative comments about the school, students, parents, governors, Trust or staff on social media.
- e. Any second or additional jobs (both paid and unpaid) that may impact on your role or create a conflict of interest must be declared to and agreed with the Headteacher.

14. Dress Code

Please consult your school handbook for any specific code. However, RET expects that:

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- a. Staff will dress in an appropriate professional manner.
- b. Outfits must not be overly revealing (e.g. low cut tops or shirts, see through or revealing clothing, excessively short skirts and shorts).
- c. Body art is covered where possible if you are working directly with students in a class or office-based situation. Piercings are kept to a minimum and covered/removed if taking part in practical activities e.g. sport.
- d. Clothes and personal items will not display any offensive language or political slogans.
- e. Other aspects of personal presentation such as make-up and hair colouring are professional and appropriate for school.

15. Smoking/Alcohol/Illegal Substances and Legal Highs

- a. Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted on any school site or in front of any student.
- b. The electronic charging of vapes is not permitted on school site.
- c. Staff will take care with the storage of cigarettes and/or nicotine replacements on site and ensure that they are not seen by or accessible to students.
- d. Alcohol will not be consumed on the premises except at agreed events.
- e. It is unacceptable for staff to come to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs/legal highs.
- f. It is inappropriate for staff to drink or consume drugs during or before meetings, parents' evenings (including online) or on any school trip or visit where they are in 'loco parentis'.
- g. Any possession or consumption of illegal substances will result in removal from site and will be reported to police and the relevant teaching authority.

16. Medication

- a. If staff take medication every day or have 'in school time' doses of medication that must be taken this will be kept in a safe place where students cannot access it.
- b. If staff need somewhere to take medication e.g. to inject insulin, they will alert the Headteacher to this requirement so that they make appropriate provision.
- c. If medication causes or may cause drowsiness and the staff concerned will be supervising students, they will make their Headteacher aware so that appropriate provision can be made.
- d. Under no circumstances will staff share medication or medical implements with students even if it is only paracetamol.

17. Teaching Materials and Equipment

- a. Teaching and teaching materials must be appropriate, having regard to the age, understanding and cultural background of the students concerned. The use of material such as books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to protected characteristics, language or sexual behaviour, must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There must always, therefore, be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's planning. The content of lessons must also comply with the school's policy on relationships and sex education. Particular caution should be exercised when planning "cover" lessons.
- b. Staff will take care of school equipment and facilities. This includes ensuring that laptops which are taken off site are kept safe and secure, switching electronic equipment off as they leave at the end of each day and closing any windows.

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- c. Staff will not use school equipment inappropriately e.g. to photocopy their own personal wedding invites; to make long distance calls to relatives.
- d. School equipment, premises and systems (telephone, email, computers etc.) are available only for school-related activities and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless authorised by the Headteacher. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery and premises.
- e. Staff will not sell or give away equipment or materials that belong to the school without the permission of the Headteacher.
- f. On leaving the school (permanently) e.g. because of starting a new job, all school equipment will be returned to the school in a timely manner e.g. laptop, keys, student work. Resources created for use in the school will be left accessible to line managers.

18. Reporting Incidents

- a. Staff must report to the DSL or Headteacher any concerns that they may have following any incident where they feel that their actions or the actions of other staff may have been misinterpreted, or where a student, parent or third party has complained to them either about their own actions or the actions of another member of staff.

19. Health and Safety

- a. Employees must adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well. This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and the local authority where required.

20. Obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018

- a. Managing data - Where staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data it is done so in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.
- b. Disclosing data - Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or pupils to other parties, for example, parents or colleagues. There are particular exceptions to this; for example disclosure of suspected or alleged abuse of a student to Child Protection officers; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the Whistleblowing Procedure. All communication with the media must be directed through the Headteacher or their nominee, who will have sought advice from the appropriate source e.g. the Local Authority's communication department. There are circumstances in which staff are obliged to release student data, for example, parents seeking information about their child.