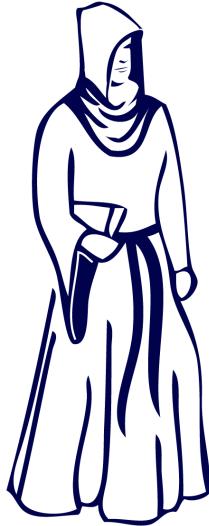




Staff code of conduct Policy



MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

Date of Issue: February 2025

Policy Review Date: February 2026

Policy Status: Headteacher Approved

Responsible member of SLT: Matt Grinyer

Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7NL

www.monkswalk.herts.sch.uk

(01707) 322846

**The contents of this policy are based on the HfL Code of Conduct
updated September 2022**

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Principles.....	2
2.1.	Setting an example.....	2
3.	Safeguarding Students	2
3.1.	Low Level Concerns.....	3
4.	Relationships	3
4.1.	Relationships with students.....	4
5.	Student Development.....	6
6.	Honesty and Integrity	6
7.	Conduct outside of Work.....	6
8.	E-Safety and Internet Use	7
9.	Confidentiality	8
10.	Dress and Appearance.....	8
11.	Compliance	8
12.	Appendix 1- Confirmation of compliance	9
13.	Appendix 2 - Relationships with students outside of work declaration	9
14.	Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration.....	10

1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all Trust employees and those acting on behalf of the Trust are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the Trust.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Trust. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Managing Conduct Policy which may be found on the staff hub under policies.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the Trust will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

2. Principles

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all the Trust's policies and procedures. Staff will be asked on an annual basis to sign a declaration that they have read and understood this document.

Staff must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.

2.1. Setting an example

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Therefore, all staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times
- demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

3. Safeguarding Students

Staff have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student or colleague to the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Designated Senior Person (DSP).

The Trust's DSL is Ben Farlow. The Deputy DSLs are Kate Simmonds, Adam Lancaster and Justine Skelton.

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found on the staff hub under policies and staff must be familiar with these documents. Staff are required to declare annually that they have read and understood the Child Protection policy and Whistleblowing policies.

Staff should treat students with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine students, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing, or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

Staff must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt with in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

3.1. Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

4. Relationships

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of the Trust. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Line Manager where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either. This may be due to a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest for example. The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence in accordance with the Relationships section of this policy.

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with students outside of the Trust; this may include mutual membership of social groups or family connections. Staff should not assume that the Trust are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found

in appendix 2 of this document.

4.1. Relationships with students

Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship, or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with students must be via Trust-authorised mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

Staff are not permitted to tutor, in a private capacity, students at Monk's Walk School unless agreed by a senior leader.

If staff are contacted by a student through an inappropriate route such as a Facebook friend request, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes students seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

If you are a parent of a child in school, it is understood that you will come into contact with students and parents outside of work. On these occasions we would expect you to use your discretion and maintain appropriate relationships at all times. It is also understood that, in school, you will have access to personal information and data systems and you should ensure that you maintain confidentiality and professionalism at all times.

4.2 Relationships between staff

Definition of Related Persons

In the context of this policy a personal relationship is defined as;

- A family relationship
- A business/commercial/financial relationship
- A romantic/sexual relationship

The above definitions are examples of personal relationships which may give rise to conflicts of interest in the workplace, however personal relationships are not restricted to these examples and anyone who considers that they are in a potential conflict of interest should declare it as outlined in the policy below.

Identifying and Declaring a Personal Relationship at Work

Existing or new personal relationships should be declared to the employee's line manager or Headteacher (see Appendix 3). The line manager or Headteacher will treat these matters in confidence and in consultation with the employees, find ways in which potential conflicts of interest can be avoided. Where personal relationships occur between employees, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

All declarations should be treated in confidence, recorded in writing and kept securely. Should there be any changes in the future, the employee should request that the document should be removed from the file and destroyed. Employees who declare a personal relationship at work, should be treated fairly and with due regard to equality of treatment issues.

Employees who are uncertain about whether there is likely to be any risk of a potential conflict of interest emerging from a personal relationship at work, should discuss the matter with their line manager (or Headteacher where the issue may involve the immediate line manager) in the first instance. Employees should approach their line manager in confidence should a relationship develop that may potentially contravene the principles of this policy.

Where either a personal relationship as defined above, or failure to comply with this policy (following investigation), results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties to the relationship the matter will be considered seriously by the Trust. This includes investigation of the above in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary policy and procedures.

Personal Relationships Involving a More Senior Role

In order to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interest, employees who are in a line management or supervisory role should not be involved in:

- The Appraisal/Performance Review, promotion or discipline or any other management activity or process involving an employee with whom they have a declared personal relationship;
- The authorisation of any financial payments/decisions relating to financial matters e.g. timesheets, fees payments, expense claims, salary changes or allocation of external funding for an employee with whom they have a declared personal relationship. However, if the person is the budget holder then they should see the financial transaction but have additional independent authorisation.

Employees who are in a line management or supervisory role, should not normally be involved in any way in the recruitment, selection or appointment of any applicant with whom they have a declared personal relationship. Where it is not practical to remove an employee from the recruitment process, all panel members should be made aware of the personal relationship and every panel decision should be justified as fair and equitable, without bias or conflict of interest.

If an employee believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest, they should raise this with their line manager in the first instance.

Where any employee feels that there is a possible or actual misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest relating to a personal relationship at work involving a line manager, they should raise this in the first instance with the Headteacher.

Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may result from a personal relationship, the line manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may wish to consider an alternative arrangement e.g. a change in reporting arrangements, or duties within a team; investigating one party being moved to another area of work or work location, if appropriate in the circumstances.

Personal Relationship at Work Not in a More Senior Role

Whilst the Trust can accommodate partners and family members working within the organisation some regulation is necessary where such employees are brought into closer contact e.g. within the same Department/Team.

Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may occur as a result of employees with a personal relationship working within

the same area, the line manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may wish to consider an alternative arrangement, e.g. a change in reporting arrangements, or duties within a team; investigating one party being moved to another area of work or work location, if appropriate in the circumstances.

When a Relationship Breaks Down

There may be occasions when a relationship as defined, breaks down and the individuals concerned remain in the same department/team, with a potential impact on team relationships and service delivery. If it is envisaged that the breakdown of the relationship is or will cause ongoing workplace issues, these should be addressed sensitively in discussion with the employees with a view to the issues being resolved, where possible.

5. Student Development

Staff must comply with all Trust policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

6. Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

- offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
- if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure which may be found on the staff hub under policies.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Trust must be declared to the Line Manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off “token” gifts from students or parents.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received. Staff must not act on behalf of the Trust unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the Trust will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. A copy of any references given should be sent to Victoria Lyall to be kept on file. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

7. Conduct outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the Trust or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust’s community.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour

outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the Trust will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the Trust could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk. In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee's suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

Staff may undertake work outside the Trust, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the Trust. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

- staff must disclose any work outside the Trust or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the Trust
- if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside the Trust (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their Line Manager.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are students under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the Trust's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with students at the Trust.

Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

8. E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. Staff should be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, the Trust's community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with students should only be made via the use of Trust email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of students should only be taken using Trust equipment, for purposes authorised by the Trust. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Trust's procedures on Trust equipment.

Further details on this can be found in the Online Safety Policy and Acceptable User

Agreements which can be found on the staff hub under policies.

9. Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

All staff may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential.

For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff), once reported through the appropriate Trust procedure, it must not be discussed outside the Trust, including with other staff, students, parents or carers, in the Trust except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must not promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the Trust, its performance, governance, students or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher or designated person.

10. Dress and Appearance

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image, not casual wear.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where employees are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, the Trust will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The Trust understand that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some employees to follow a code (for example, if an employee has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the Trust will discuss with the employee how we can support the employee and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The Trust has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

11. Compliance

All staff must complete the following MS form annually to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. [Staff Declaration \(office.com\)](#)

All new members of staff that join throughout the year are provided with a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct and asked to complete the form to confirm they have read and understood their commitments.

A copy of the form can also be found in Appendix 1

12. Appendix 1- Confirmation of compliance

Staff Declaration (office.com)

13. Appendix 2 - Relationships with students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the Trust are known to students outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the Trust that they may have with students.

Employee Name	Student Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of the Trust with students in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a student outside of the Trust, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the Trust
- no monies come through the Trust at any point, either informally (e.g., via the student) or formally
- no private tutoring has/will take place on the Trust's premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the Trust are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

Current Position

Signed by _____

Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Victoria Lyall, HR.

14. Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the Trust are known to others connected with the Trust outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the Trust that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

Employee Name	3 rd party name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct and relationships at work policy, and I am not in breach of these.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the Trust are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

Current Position

Signed by _____

Date _____

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Victoria Lyall, HR.