

Staff Code of Conduct

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff of the Trust to follow. This should be read in conjunction with associated policies and the Teachers' Standards.

By creating this policy, the Trust aims to be an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Staff have an influential position in the school within the Trust and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all teaching staff, support staff, governors, trustees, volunteers and contractors to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping children safe in education 2024.pdf](#) and [The Equalities Act 2010](#), we have a staff code of conduct, which covers low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Teaching staff to adhere to the [Teachers' Standards](#)

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Staff will familiarise themselves with the Trust child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

The child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available to all staff. All staff will be asked to read them and confirm that they have and will agree to comply with the policies.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the Trust, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of a school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation and details of how this will be completed are in the managing allegations procedures. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. Or in the case of the CEO being subject to allegation it would be the Chair of Trustees.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in the child protection and safeguarding policy. Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the Trust's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in the child protection and safeguarding policy.

The procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or Trust procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at their school, or their Headteacher, CEO or contact the HR department. However if it is believed that the Headteacher may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the local governing board. For the CEO, the concern should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For the Trust's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to the whistle-blowing policy.

5. Staff - Pupil Relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in the child protection and safeguarding policy.

Professional Conduct in Public Settings

- All Trust staff are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging in social activities in public settings, particularly within the local community where students and their families may be present.
- Staff members should be mindful that their behaviour, both on and off Trust premises, can reflect upon the reputation of the Trust and influence public perception.
- While it is acknowledged that staff members have personal lives and the right to socialise outside of working hours, it is important to exercise caution and maintain a high standard of conduct at all times.
- Staff members are expected to refrain from engaging in any activities that may compromise the Trust and respect students and families place in the Trust and its staff.

Responsible Socialising

- When staff members find themselves in a social setting where students or families are present, they should be particularly mindful of their behaviour and ensure that it aligns with the values and expectations of the school community.
- Staff members should exercise discretion and avoid engaging in activities that may be deemed inappropriate, offensive, or harmful to the reputation of the Trust.
- It is essential for staff members to maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid situations that may compromise their professional relationships with students or families, both in and outside of school hours.

Establishment Selection

- In the event that staff members encounter students who are consuming alcohol or engaging in other inappropriate behaviours within the same establishment, it is strongly advised that they exercise good judgement and consider relocating to an alternative venue.
- By choosing to frequent an establishment where students are participating in activities that are prohibited by Trust policies or against the law, staff members may inadvertently undermine their authority and create potential conflicts of interest.
- It is the responsibility of staff members to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and to ensure that their personal choices do not compromise their role as positive role models within the school community.

Disciplinary Measures

- Violations of this staff and pupil relations policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures being taken, in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedures.
- It is essential for staff members to understand that their actions and conduct, both in and outside of the school environment, have the potential to impact their professional standing and the overall reputation of the Trust.

Reporting Incidents

- If staff members become aware of any instances where students are engaging in inappropriate activities while they are socialising outside of school premises, it is their duty

to report such incidents to the relevant school authorities, following the appropriate reporting procedures.

Staff Relationships

- We understand staff members maybe in relationships with other staff. Staff should declare these relationships if there is a conflict of interest, for example, they are the direct reporting line of their partner.

6. Communication and social media

Staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent. Staff should be aware of the Trust's Acceptable use of ICT Systems and Data protection.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology at work to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the working day. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

The Trust has the right to monitor emails and internet use on the Trust IT system.

8. Confidentiality

Members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in the child protection and safeguarding policy.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses, receiving gifts and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the Trust is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the Trust, the member of staff will advise the Trust as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a formal, professional, appropriate manner. The staff dress code is set out in the Staff Handbook.

Clothes or tattoos will not display any offensive or political slogans.

There may be formal occasions where a specific dress code is required, and this will be communicated with staff prior to the event.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, Trust or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school or Trust on social media.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed such as changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The local governing boards will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with Trust policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and Safeguarding
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Staff - Acceptable use of ICT Systems and Data protection policies
- Whistle-blowing

14. Appendix A - Further guidance for members of Staff who are also Parents of Students attending a School within the Trust

I have read and understood the Staff Code of Conduct

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix A

Further guidance for members of Staff who are also Parents of Students attending a School within the Trust

The following guidance is intended to mitigate against conflicts of interest that may occur when the child of a member of Staff, Governor or Trustee is a student at a school with the Trust, and to ensure that each child receives an equitable experience, developing responsibility for themselves and their property.

Staff/Governors/Trustees whose child is a student at the school:

- Should identify another adult to be the primary contact for all school issues (except when this contact is not available). Contact must be made via established email addresses for parent/carer communications.
- Should keep contact with your child to a minimum during the working day.
- Should avoid speaking to other staff about their child during the school day. If you need to speak to a member of staff about your child, an appointment should be made, ideally by the other adult contact.
- Should address other members of staff by their title and surname (e.g. Mrs/Mr Bloggs) when meeting with their child and their teacher (e.g. at Parents' Evenings)
- Should not enter into a discussion with mutual colleagues if they have a particular issue with any of their child's teachers. The parent identified as the primary contact should raise any issue with the school via the available channels.
- Should respect that offices, team spaces, and the Staff room facilities are for the sole use of staff before, during and after school.
- Should follow the normal processes with regard to student matters e.g. reporting daily absence, Leave of Absence requests, not entering the exam room unless invited, issuing of examination results, use of Student Welfare for medical issues.
- Staff/governors/trustees will inevitably have contact out of school with other students/parents. Staff/governors/trustees should be aware of the need for discretion and confidentiality within the work and home environment as comments may be overheard or misconstrued by others; staff need to be particularly aware of issues surrounding the use of social media.
- In the event of making contact with other students/parents out of school, staff/governors/trustees must make it clear whether the contact is as a member of staff/governor/trustee or as a parent. During school time contact should only be made as a member of staff/governor/trustee. This is to avoid confusion in the minds of those students or their parents as to whether the contact is as a teacher or a parent.
- Staff/governors/trustees should not participate in educational visits involving their own child, especially when these are residential. If this is unavoidable, a protocol will be devised in advance of the visit with regard to how their child/party is to be managed if an incident arises and noted on the risk assessment.

- Must remain mindful of their responsibility to support the school in safeguarding all students.
- Where applicable, should make sure they declare any examination conflict of interest using the form sent out to staff by the exams officer - for example if they have a child doing an NEA in a subject that they also teach.

The Trust and School will:

- Endeavour to ensure that staff are not asked to teach or support their own child, except when the parent is the sole teacher of a particular subject. In this event, safeguards will be put in place regarding marking and assessments by the Headteacher.
- Avoid a parent having pastoral oversight of their child.
- Endeavour to ensure that staff/governors/trustees do not participate in educational visits involving their own child, especially when these are residential. If this is unavoidable, a protocol will be devised in advance of the visit with regard to how their child/party is to be managed if an incident arises and will be noted on the risk assessment.