



# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



## 1. Purpose

School employees are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

In performing their duties, employees are required to act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity. The School's standards of behaviour are set out in this 'Code of Conduct' and is aimed to help staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the school, including the Headteacher.
- all staff in units or bases that are attached to the school.

This code should be complementary to any specific school procedures or standards of conduct, for example the staff handbook. Similarly, professional employees such as teachers are also bound by standards of professional conduct and those set out within the Teachers Standards' 2012.

This document should be read alongside Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2015 (Safer Recruitment consortium adapted and updated from original DfE document), in conjunction with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Whilst it is hoped that this is never the case, all employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal.

Data Protection – The organisation processes personal data collected in line with the expectations of employees as set out within the Code of Conduct in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes outlined within the Code. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure.

## 2. General Responsibilities at Work

All employees are expected to work within the scope of their contract of employment, carrying out the reasonable instructions of their supervisors, managers, Head of School; and to work to the requirements of their job description.

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect.

Employees should not seek to deceive the school by withholding information, giving false information, or destroying, damaging or altering any records or documents without proper authorisation.

Employees should not misrepresent the school in their dealings with others or make any statement on behalf of the school which they are not authorised to do (for example, giving a reference for a colleague on behalf of the school, making statements to the press or other media).

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



Staff are required to comply with the school's equality policies in respect of colleagues, students and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, students and parents.

### **3. Setting an example**

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore avoid always using inappropriate or offensive language. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.

Good levels of attendance & punctuality are essential. All staff must be punctual for all timetabled activities, including: lessons, meetings, assemblies and extra-curricular events. All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

### **4. Hours of Work and Attendance**

Employees are required to work the hours stated in their contract of employment, or as required in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document in respect of directed time. Employees should be at work at the proper start time (unless there is prior agreement to arrive late); agree in advance with their manager any planned absences (for example, a medical appointment); agree with your manager any annual leave, special leave or other leave of absence before they take any time off or book any holidays (except in cases of bereavement leave or emergency leave).

All employees are required to follow the school's absence reporting procedure if they are absent due to sickness.

### **5. Honesty and Integrity**

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

In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual dishonesty. Employees should at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or 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 for schools.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher/equivalent, or to the Operations Manager/Directors if the Headteacher/equivalent is the recipient, 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.

## 6. Harassment at Work

All employees should work in an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The school will not tolerate any employee being subjected to bullying or harassment and any complaints of perceived bullying and harassment will be considered seriously.

Examples of actions that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Exclusion or victimisation
- Insulting/offensive comments or language
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Inappropriate sexual advances
- Ridiculing or demeaning an individual
- Abuse or misuse of power which undermines or humiliates an individual
- Abuse of authority and use of threats to coerce others by fear
- Withholding information, removing areas of responsibility without discussion or impeding work performance
- Preventing progression by denying opportunities for promotion and training

## 7. Sexual harassment

Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Something can still be considered sexual harassment even if the alleged harasser didn't mean for it to be. It also doesn't have to be intentionally directed at a specific person.

Sexual harassment can happen to both men and women in any number of ways, including:

- Written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee's Appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes.
- Displaying pornographic or explicit images.
- Emails with content of a sexual nature.
- Unwanted physical contact and touching.
- Sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable regardless of a person's position or influence within the school. Any employee who feels they have been sexually harassed, or any employee who feels they have seen sexual harassment take place, can make a complaint of sexual harassment.

If any employee feels that they are being bullied or harassed (including sexually harassed) are encouraged to make a complaint in line with the school's Grievance, Harassment at Work, or Whistleblowing procedures.

## 8. Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



In particular, criminal offences or types of behaviour that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook, Snapchat etc. with pupils or former pupils.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Staff must only use their school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.

## **9. Alcohol, Drugs and Medication at Work**

Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at work is not permitted. Alcohol may not be consumed during working hours, including lunchtime and break time.

Employees must also note that many prescribed medications and over the counter medicines can have an adverse effect on the ability to work. Therefore, employees must always check that they can still work safely before taking any drug.

## **10. Smoking**

Staff are not permitted to smoke on the school premises or grounds. This includes all types of smoking devices and paraphernalia including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, etc.

## **11. Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse is a crime. The school may consider a range of measures to support an employee who discloses living in or dealing with a violent relationship, for example counselling, flexibility around workload. Employees found to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

## **12. Health and Safety at Work**

Every school has a legal duty of care for the health and safety and welfare of its employees. In addition, all employees must take reasonable steps to protect their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work. Employees have a duty to help prevent accidents and injuries at work by being aware of the policies that apply and complying with them at all.

## **13. Use of Mobile Phones**

Communication with children and vulnerable adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Employees should not share any personal information with a child, or young person and should not use their personal mobile to communicate with any young person or on a personal level or to take photographs/videos of pupils/students.

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



Personal mobile phones should be stored securely away from learning environments and it is highly recommended that mobiles are switched off during work hours and should only be accessed during breaks and lunchtime but not in the presence of young people. This also applies when in meetings with young people and parents.

Employees must not give their personal contact details to children, or young people, including their mobile telephone number.

Employees must inform the Headteacher or line manager immediately if contacted by a young person on a personal mobile.

## 14. Social Media Usage

The web and social networking services i.e. Facebook, twitter, Instagram, snapchat etc are all used by children, vulnerable adults and employees for work related projects or for personal use. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media, blog or any other form of user-generated media. Please remember that internet content is never truly deleted or private. This means everything that is published will be visible to the world indefinitely. Employees should be sure that they want what they're posting to be in the public domain with their name on it indefinitely. If in doubt, don't post.

Employees should use common sense. If employees are about to publish something that makes them even the slightest bit uncomfortable, they should stop and hold off. Again, if in doubt, don't post.

Employees are advised to keep profiles safe by not show their job title, place of work or work/home email address. Employees should be cautious declaring their status as young people may challenge them i.e. online dating.

Employees should not befriend children/young people where their only relationship is one formed through an employees' professional role. Employees should not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person.

No photography of pupils/students, vulnerable adults or staff taken at school/workplace or on social occasions connected to the workplace should be displayed on any social networking site. Employees must avoid airing their personal grievances about work on social media. This has the potential to damage the reputation of the school and could involve disciplinary action. If an employee does have an issue or grievance they want to raise, this should be done internally so it can be properly addressed.

Employees should ensure that they manage and understand the privacy settings on their social media.

Employees must not share confidential material on their private social media channels.

Employees are expected to respect their audience. This goes without saying, but employees must not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace.

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



Employees must not use their school email address to sign up to social media sites.

Internet use during working hours is strictly for business not personal use.

Any form of personalised social media networking that is found to reveal confidential information about the school, information relating to a pupil or student, attacks on or abuse of a colleague or 'customer' of the school, or constitutes a conflict of interest, or is in breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action.

## 15. Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

It is important that all adults working with children and vulnerable adults understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust.

All staff should behave in a manner consistent with the principles, guidance and standards outlined within the Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2015 (Safer Recruitment consortium adapted and updated from original DfE document), and the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated, and where appropriate, failure to follow these standards could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## 16. Childcare Disqualification

There are many reasons why someone may be disqualified under the 2006 Childcare Act and 2009 Regulations. Where an employee meets any one of the following criteria and works in a relevant setting for the purpose of this legislation, they must discuss this with the Head of School.

Inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List,  
Being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults which are referred to in regulation 4 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the 2009 Regulations (note that regulation 4 also refers to offences that are listed in other pieces of legislation).

Certain orders made in relation to the care of children which are referred to in regulation 4 and listed at Schedule 1 of the 2009 Regulations.

Refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare,<sup>3</sup> or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering, as specified in Schedule 1 of the 2009 Regulations.

Being found to have committed an offence overseas which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2009 Regulations if it had been done in any part of the United Kingdom.

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



If they are unsure whether they are covered by these regulations, employees must discuss this with their Head of School.

If during the course of their employment any of the above criteria does become applicable to an employee, it is their duty to inform the Head of School as this may affect their suitability to work in the setting.

As schools are prohibited from employing a disqualified person it is the responsibility of employees to inform the Head of School of any change in their circumstances which could change their suitability, failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

'excellence by any measure'

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