



Staff Code of Conduct

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Staff Code of Conduct

1. Introduction and Scope

The purpose of this Staff Code of Conduct (hereafter 'the Code') is to provide a framework for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between professionals working on behalf of the Trust and those in receipt of its educational services. The Code sets out the minimum standards expected of all staff, volunteers, contractors and locums working for the Trust inside or outside of school ("employees"—).

The Code is designed to be supportive and aims to help employees to maintain professional standards of behaviour and protect themselves from misunderstanding or criticism. The Code does not supersede local operating guidelines nor the need for Employees to fulfil the obligations laid down in their job description, work plan and contract of employment. The Code does not attempt to identify every school rule that exists but highlights some key rules, which broadly apply to all Employees.

Also, staff in schools have a common law duty of care towards pupils and have a legal obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of all pupils, whose needs must be the first and paramount consideration (Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006).

2. Behaviour and Standards

Each employee shares a responsibility for recognising the sensitivities and feelings of others, which may be different from their own but no less valid. All employees should be committed to high standards in delivering work and dealing with colleagues, this will not only be about the tasks people do but the effect of their words, how they interact/engage with others and tackling discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour' (Respect at Work Policy).

Employees also have a responsibility to not behave in such a way that may 'bring the reputation of the school into disrepute' outside of working hours particularly if they live and work in the local community. Employees have a responsibility to work with colleagues and treat them with respect.

Trust employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of educational services to the public and, where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate and impartial advice. All employees are expected to bring to the attention of the appropriate manager any deficiency in the provision of educational services to the public.

Teachers are also subject to the standards of personal and professional conduct set out in the Teachers' Standards document

All employees are expected, without fear of recrimination, to report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure. The Trust has a policy for "whistleblowing" (raising a concern) to facilitate this.

3. Criminal Actions

Trust Employees must inform the Headteacher/Head of School (CEO if the employee is the Headteacher/Head of School/Executive Headteacher or Chair of Trust if the employee is the CEO) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Headteacher (also read Head of School) or CEO will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard pupils and other employees within the Trust.

4. Appropriate Dress

The Trust expects all employees to dress appropriately while at work so that the confidence of pupils, parents / carers and visitors is maintained. While the Trust values diversity and is not seeking to achieve a complete uniformity of dress style, the Trust does expect all employees' clothing at work to be neat, clean and appropriate for working with children and young people. Some staff e.g. teachers taking PE lessons, will wear specific sportswear appropriate to their role. When staff are accompanying pupils out of school they should dress in a way that makes them easily recognisable as being in a position of responsibility for young people.

Employees should not wear anything which represents a risk to health and safety or anything which is likely to bring the Trust into disrepute (i.e. potentially offensive badges, logos or motifs).

Employees should maintain high standards of personal hygiene and grooming.

This dress code is not gender specific and staff should feel comfortable dressing in the clothing that matches their gender identity.

Examples of acceptable clothing include a combination of;

- Appropriate length skirts (i.e. a minimum of knee length) or trousers
- Tailored shorts
- Blouses/shirts (long or short sleeve)
- Smart plain T-shirts/polo shirts
- Jumpers, jackets, dresses, business suits, ties

Non-acceptable clothing includes:

- Mini-skirts
- Lycra cycling shorts or leggings
- Leisure shorts unless for PE or sports
- Tracksuits unless for PE or sports
- Jeans or denim jackets or denim clothing
- Trainers unless for PE or sports
- See through clothing
- Clothing with tears, holes and rips or that is not clean
- Offensive badges, emblems or logos on clothes
- Indoor wearing of baseball caps or hats
- Flip flops or any backless shoe eg Birkenstocks, sliders, mules
- Underwear should not be visible

Tattoos and piercings should be covered as much as is practicably possible.

Staff are able to wear religious symbols that do not interfere with their work and we support colleagues who wear specific items of clothing for religious reasons

If you have any concerns please contact your line manager for advice.

5. Confidentiality and Disclosure of information

The law and the Trust also encourage open governance and there are rules and guidelines around disclosure of certain types of information. All employees must be aware of which information the Trust is and is not open about and act accordingly.

Employees should not communicate to the public, press, television or any outside agency the contents of any documents relating to the Trust or the proceedings of any committee meeting that is confidential information unless required by law or authorised by an appropriate manager to do so. The only exception is in the case of elected Trade Union officials acting in their official capacity. However, Trade Union representatives would be expected to raise any issues through the normal channels through the Trust in the first instance.

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way for example passing dates for review of contracts for services before they are public knowledge.

Employees or volunteers in schools must not use confidential or sensitive information about a pupil or their family for their own benefit or to humiliate or embarrass a pupil. Confidential information about pupils or the Trust should not be shared casually; however, information that might suggest that a pupil is in need or at risk of significant harm must be shared with the Designated Person, in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding / child protection procedures.

6. Social contact

Trust employed staff should not establish or seek to establish any social contact or social media contact with a pupil. Unplanned or other social contact of a sustained nature that happens outside of the school setting should be reported to the Headteacher. Staff should not give their personal telephone numbers or email addresses to pupils. If this is unavoidable or staff have existing or previous family or social relationships with a pupil and their parents/carers their line manager should be notified.

No member of staff will enter into extra or private tuition or childcare arrangements with parents without the permission of the Headteacher.

7. Physical contact

When employees make physical contact with pupils, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratuity of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. Extra caution should be exercised where a pupil is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a pupil exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the pupil through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Any extreme attention-seeking or behaviour by pupils that makes staff feel uncomfortable should be reported to a line manager. Staff supervising PE, DT and games or providing music tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils, the principle of "limited touch" should be applied, with understanding of pupil's sensitivities and with the pupil's agreement. Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy while they are changing or showering after games or swimming.

All adults, both employees and visitors to the Trust, should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with pupils. Intimate relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to an

inappropriate relationship is also unacceptable. Staff must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring. Employees should make themselves aware of the safeguarding and behaviour management policies adopted by the Trust.

8. Infatuations

It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations or “crushes” towards trusted staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned and any indications that this might be happening reported to the Head Teacher. In addition, the object of the pupil or parent’s infatuation may not even be aware of this; in this case colleagues must bring this to the colleague’s attention and report this to the Head Teacher.

9. Pupils in distress

On those occasions when a pupil may be in distress and in need of comfort and reassurance, staff should ensure that they remain self-aware at all times and that their contact with the pupil is not open to misunderstanding. Such incidents must be shared with a line manager.

10. Care, control and physical intervention

The Trust is committed to the use of positive behaviour management and staff will not use any form of physical punishment, threats, sarcasm or demeaning comments to deal with unacceptable behaviour. When children need to be reasonably restrained for their own protection or the protection of others any such incidents and physical interventions will be recorded and reported to parents / carers.

11. One to one situations

Staff working individually with pupils should recognise the potential vulnerability of pupils and adults in such situations and ensure that they manage these situations with regard for the safety of both the pupil and themselves. Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external visual access, other than in situations where the nature of the work requires confidentiality e.g. school counsellor. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

12. Home visits

All work with pupils and parents should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the school or other recognised workplace. There are, however, occasions in response to urgent or specific situations where it may be necessary to make one-off or more regular home visits.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the pupil, parents and others living in the household. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be put in place before visits are agreed. Where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone.

No pupil should be in or invited into, the home of a Trust employee.

13. Educational visits and After-School Activities

Employees remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay

careful attention to ensuring safe staff/pupil ratios and to the gender mix of staff on overnight stays.

14. Transporting or accompanying pupils off-site

In general, Trust employees will not be expected to transport or accompany individual pupils off-site on their own. However, in the event of an emergency situation (accompanying to a hospital), this may be appropriate. If employees use their own cars for transporting pupils, they will ensure appropriate escort arrangements and that they have business use motor insurance in place.

15. First Aid

All first aid will be administered only by suitably trained and accredited staff except in an emergency where the illness or injury is such that to delay assistance might cause harm to the pupil or staff member. Pupils who require any form of intimate care are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety. Pupils with on-going health problems will be treated in accordance with any Care Plan that has been agreed with the parent and the respective Health Authority and only by those who have been authorised to do so by the respective Headteacher. Members of staff should not be placed in a position where they are expected to provide any form of intimate care without the safeguard of having another colleague as chaperone in the same room or area.

16. Curriculum

Care should be taken to abide by the Trust's policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. The curriculum can include or raise subject matter that is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. Care should be exercised to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the lesson plan. The curriculum can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion of sensitive subject matters. Responding to pupils' questions requires careful judgements and guidance should be sought from members of the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.

17. Photography, videos and other creative arts

The Trust's policy with regard to photographs and other images of pupils in school is to seek formal consent from parents/caregivers during enrolment and note exceptions on the MIS - BromCom. If in doubt, please check to see if permission has been denied by the parent. All images must be stored appropriately and securely i.e. is password protected files online or stored in locked cabinets/drawers, and only used by those authorised to do so. Staff should be able to give account of the rationale behind any images of pupils that are in their possession.

Images taken for official school use are covered in the General Data Protection (GDPR) rules, e.g. if the images are going to be stored with other personal data. If the photograph is taken of groups of pupils during lessons and will be used in the school's prospectus, website or social media accounts, then formal consent will have previously been sought from parents, or in the case of social media, the pupil will have been notified at the time of the photo or video being taken. Names of children must not be published with images.

While photographic images can play a valuable role within the curriculum, after-school activities and to celebrate achievement, there is potential for such images and opportunities to be misused by adults with ulterior motives. Staff should be sensitive to the needs of pupils who may be uncomfortable or not wish to participate in photography or recording.

Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of the images and if the images will be available publicly on the internet or by other

means. In general, names of pupils will not be published on any images made available within the public domain by the Trust and its representatives.

18. Safeguarding

Trust employees must be aware of the name of the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding pupils (and their deputy) and understand their responsibilities under the safeguarding / child protection policy. All employees have a responsibility to raise concerns about the inappropriate or worrying behaviour of a colleague: in good faith and without fear of repercussions. Staff must accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. They must make a record of any incident and promptly consult their line manager. All staff are obliged to support the Governors' and Trustees' statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and well-being of all pupils.

Where allegations are made about the mistreatment of a pupil by a member of staff or volunteer, the Headteacher will follow the procedures adopted by the Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Volunteers policy, in consultation with relevant designated Local Authority officers. In the case where an allegation is made against the Headteacher, the CEO, will follow the above procedures, in the case of the CEO the Chair of the Trust will.

Staff and volunteers working in schools must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring. Staff should declare to the Headteacher / CEO any caution, conviction or if bound over as soon as possible.

19. Whistleblowing

If employees have concerns about something that is happening at work which they believe could be unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, a concern for the welfare or safeguarding of a pupil or be dangerous to the public or the environment, it is important that it is brought to the Trust's attention following the Whistleblowing Policy.

20. Political neutrality

Employees must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and must at all times perform their duties in an objective manner.

21. Appointment and other employment matters

All employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment that was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. The Trust's recruitment and selection procedures must be strictly observed. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with them.

Trust employees should make the Headteacher/CEO aware of any personal relations with other staff members, governors or trustees that might lead to a conflict of interests or cast doubt on the integrity of the Trust; especially where one or other of the parties holds a management or leadership role

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, capability, promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.

22. Relationships with the local community and service users

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial conduct to all groups and individuals within that

community as defined by the policies of the Trust. This may involve dealing with troubled, angry and frustrated parents and carers, although employees are never expected to place their personal health, safety and welfare at risk.

23. Relationships with contractors and suppliers

All relationships of a business or private nature with current or potential external contractors or suppliers, must be made known to the Headteacher and/or Trust or Local Governing Body and properly recorded. All employees who engage or supervise contractors or who have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, must also declare that relationship. A Declaration of Interest pro-forma is available for such notification.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenderers and no special favour should be shown to businesses or consultancies run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives, in the tendering process.

24. Outside commitments

Employees' off-duty hours are their own personal concern. However, employees should not take up any outside activities or employment, whether paid or unpaid, which conflicts with or reacts detrimentally to, or has such potential, to the Trust's interests. In order to assess whether or not there might be a conflict, Employees are required to inform the Headteacher of any outside employment.

25. Intellectual property rights

Employees should follow the Trust's rules on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment. All patents, trademarks and other rights in inventions or concepts that are created or developed by Employees during and arising from their employment belongs to the Trust, subject to any rights acquired by Employees under the Patents Act 1977. The Trust also owns the copyright in all work produced by employees during their employment.

26. Personal interests

Employees must declare to the Headteacher or CEO any financial or non-financial interests they consider could bring about a conflict with the Trust's interests. Employee's must not make, or become involved with, any official or professional decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.

27. Gifts

Employees may accept small tokens from pupils and/or their guardians at times of the year associated with gift-giving. Tokens whose value is likely to exceed £25 should be entered into the School's Gifts Register. Employees should not accept personal gifts of any significant value (>£25) from any party with whom the Trust has any commercial relationship.

Personal gifts should not be given by staff to pupils. Any reward to a pupil should be consistent with the School's behaviour policy, recorded and not based upon favouritism.

28. Hospitality

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Trust in the community. Offers to attend purely social, entertainment or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Trust/school should be seen to be represented. All such offers of hospitality should be properly authorised and recorded by the relevant manager; or in the event of a Trustee receiving an offer of hospitality, the board of trustees should be informed.

When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Trust.

When receiving authorised hospitality, employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Trust may be taking affecting or potentially affecting those providing the hospitality.

Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is school/education related rather than personal, where the Headteacher/CEO gives consent in advance and where the Headteacher/CEO is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, etc. are required, Employees should ensure that the Trust meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

29. Sponsorship – giving and receiving

When an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning the acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the Trust wishes to sponsor an event or services, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full prior disclosure to the Headteacher of any such interest. Similarly, where the Trust through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support to the community, employees should ensure impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest.

30. Use of financial resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the Trust. All employees should ensure that they have an appropriate awareness of the Trust's financial regulations and that their actions fully comply with those regulations.

31. Use of school property and facilities for personal use

Employees are not normally permitted to use school premises, facilities, office equipment, e.g. personal computers, fax machines, photocopiers and the like, for personal use without prior authorisation from the Headteacher.

32. Use of Telephones, Email and Internet

Employees are discouraged from making personal use of telephones, e-mail and internet facilities during work hours. The Trust will accept essential personal telephone calls concerning an individual's domestic arrangements; excessive use of the telephone for personal calls is prohibited. Employees should also inform their family and friends only to contact them at work when it is necessary (Electronic Communications policy).

Staff should not use personal digital equipment for work purposes e.g. phones, iPads or to store work related data without sign off from the Headteacher. Digital equipment is provided by the Trust for all work related requirements.

Employees must not view their computer or anything stored on it as personal. They must not download, store, display, view, retrieve or send electronic material that uses un-authorised encryption, contains programme files, is obscene, indecent, sexist, racist, anti-semitic, defamatory, abusive, in breach of copyright, confidential, may constitute

harassment, violate an individual's dignity, or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or otherwise inappropriate environment.

The Headteacher may access an employee's work mailbox or gain access to Internet usage reports for the following reasons at any time with no notice to:

- ensure compliance with the Trust's policy,
- monitor standards of service or
- to prevent, investigate or detect unauthorised use of the IT system or criminal activities.

If pupils are found to have accessed such material, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

It is also strictly forbidden to download any software from or to load software onto the Trust's IT system except with the prior written authorisation of the Headteacher.

Employees should ensure that the style and content email messages is consistent with the standards the Trust expects from written communication and must remember that all electronic mail falls within the framework of the Data Protection legislation and should not be treated as a confidential means of communication. Employees must not correspond on any aspect of school business, unless it falls within the Employee's job description.

33. Use of Social Media

Introduction

Social media is the term commonly given to websites and online tools allowing users to interact with each other; by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media can include any website where comments and/or information can be shared and are considered to be in the public domain for example photo sharing, blogs as well as the more well-known social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram.

This guidance aims to help school staff make responsible decisions to ensure they are using their personal social media accounts and any school or Trust social media account in line with the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct. They must be used carefully to avoid potential pitfalls. Where actions in using social media are judged to contravene the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct and / or Electronic Communications policy employees may face disciplinary action and potentially summary dismissal (dismissal without notice), this may include activities outside employment.

Protocol

The basic premise is to exercise common sense. What you write on social networking sites is essentially in the public domain, even if you have privacy settings or material is posted on a closed profile or group.

1. You should only use social media in your capacity as an employee of the Trust where this is an appropriate communication tool which must be specifically endorsed by the Headteacher.
2. If you are not using social media to support you directly in your employed position, you should always access this in your personal time.
3. In any circumstance:
 - Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent

- Be mindful that what you publish may be public for a long time
 - Respect copyright and data protection laws as well as maintaining confidential information.
 - Do not publish or report information or conversations that are accessed through your employment at the Trust without explicit permission. "Conversations" may be oral or written exchanges
 - Do not use swear words or use derogatory language.
 - It is unacceptable to use social media in a manner that would generally be accepted as a hostile attempt to hurt, upset or embarrass another person, or groups of people, associated with the Trust.
 - Never represent or reproduce the Trust logo without authorisation
 - Do not publish images relating to users of the Trust's services via personal social media accounts unless consent has been given in writing
 - Be aware of safeguarding issues and materials which may adversely impact on pupils and vulnerable adults. Challenge and report inappropriate use of media.
4. In addition, in your personal use of social media:
- Ensure that your online activities or expressed opinions do not interfere with or conflict with your job or your colleagues (for example many roles within schools are viewed as role models, views expressed should not conflict with this).
 - If you are identifiable as a school employee on social networks, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you should present yourself with colleagues and users of school services
 - Do not download or copy school materials without permission
 - If you publish content to a website not owned by the Trust, and it has something to do with work that you do as an employee of the Trust (e.g. evident from your profile), use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of my employer."
 - Maintain boundaries between your personal and professional lives, including customising your privacy settings and avoiding inappropriate personal information becoming visible to members of the group (please note that information can be passed on by individuals that have been allowed access to it and any inappropriate views or content will be viewed as contravening the staff code of conduct).

34. Health and safety issues

All Employees should ensure that they are fully aware of their own duties and responsibilities under the health and safety at work legislation. A copy of the Trust's Health and Safety Policy is available for each employee.