DMAT

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Code of Conduct for Employees 2024 - 2026

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1 Purpose

1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary rules and disciplinary procedure, Teachers' Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations the Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance, they should speak to the Headteacher/CEO/Deputy CEO/SCITT leader

1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

2 Scope

2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.

2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment see disciplinary policy.

3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.

3.2 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

3.3 To do this, employees must have fully read and understood our child protection / safeguarding / all other policies, be aware of our systems for

keeping children safe and must always follow the guidance in these policies.

3.4 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

4 Duty of care

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

5 Health & Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations or instructions and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Trust
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust community or visitors.
- Inform their headteacher/SCITT leader/CEO of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

6 Honesty and personal integrity

6.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our Trust.

6.2 Employees must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by leaders or governors.

6.3 Employees uphold public trust in our school/trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and always observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position

- Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

6.4 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Employees must treat all colleagues with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy always.

6.5 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.

7 Tackling discrimination

7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Equality and Diversity policy.

7.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively always promote equality and diversity and inclusion.

8 Professional boundaries and relationships

8.1 Employees in our Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals. It is a specific offence[1] for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

8.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.

8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings

[1] Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003

or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.

8.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation, they should discuss it with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/SCITT leader immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.

8.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the Trust we expect that they identify this to the Headteacher/SCITT leader/CEO/Deputy CEO and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Where an employee has managerial authority over another employee with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the Trust reserves the right to transfer one or both employees to another role in the Trust following appropriate consultation with both employees to seek agreement to the transfer.

9 Confidentiality and protection of data

9.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.

9.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed, they should speak to the Headteacher/Deputy CEO/CEO/SCITT leader

9.3 The Trust holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Headteacher/SCITT leader/deputy CEO/CEO

9.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all our policies that relate to data including our IT policies.

10 Physical contact with students

10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.

10.2 There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age-appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position, then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to the Headteacher.

10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from

- committing a crime,
- injuring themselves or where there is intent to harm others,
- causing damage to property
- engaging in extremes of behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

Any physical intervention used should always be guided by the principle of using only reasonable force. This is defined as using no more force than is necessary in the circumstances to control the situation.

Where possible and practical all other strategies (e.g. verbal warnings, physical positioning without contact, use of other/duty staff) should have been attempted prior to deciding to physically intervene.

It is good practice if physically intervening to verbalise what you are doing and why as the intervention occurs. Any incident where physical intervention occurs should be reported to a member of SLT immediately. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment. Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

11 Social contact with students

11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

11.2 The Trust's advice to staff is not to connect to students via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and that the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.

11.3 Our Trust is part of our community, and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will encounter students outside of the academy. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Headteacher any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

11.4 Employees should read and understand our Acceptable use of ICT and Social Media policy (this can be found on the All Staff google drive in the Staff Handbook folder).

12 Working one to one with students

There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas of the school
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand
- Reports to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

13 Dress and appearance

The Trust has a dress code, and you should read and adhere to this. (a copy of the policy is displayed on the staffroom notice board and can be found on the All Staff google drive in the Staff Handbook folder)

14 Gifts and hospitality

The Trust has a Gifts and Hospitality policy, and employees should read and adhere to this (this can be found on the All Staff google drive in the Staff Handbook folder)

AND

Staff should not give gifts to students.

15 Keeping within the law

15.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

15.2 Employees must ensure that they:

- Uphold the law at work
- Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the Trust, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
    - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
    - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
    - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
    - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.

- Write and tell the Headteacher/CEO (Chair of Governors/trust if they are the Headteacher/CEO) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Trust (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or governors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the Trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

16 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

16.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

16.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the school or affect the school's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.

16.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the school.

16.4 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

17 Review

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended by the Trust as part of their policy review cycle. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.