

Staff Code of Conduct 2021

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

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all Trust staff are expected to observe, which is in line with the expectations set out in the Teacher Standards. Trust staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example and acts as a role model to all the pupils within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to

- All staff that are employed by the Trust
- All volunteers and students on placement
- All staff in extended services provided by the Trust
- Peripatetic staff who are centrally employed by the Trust

Aims

1. To keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.
2. To help staff work safely and responsibly and monitor their own standards and practice.
3. To support the management of behaviour and give a clear message that unlawful / unsafe behaviour is unacceptable.
4. To minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against staff.
5. To reduce the misuse / abuse of trust.

Duty of Care

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect children from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm as well as neglect. Trusted adults are expected to act in the child's best interests and failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace should not compromise his or her position within the work setting or bring the school or the trust into disrepute.

All staff provide a role model for behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

The Advisory Board should ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies are in place and reviewed regularly. They will monitor safeguarding procedures, which in turn will be monitored by the trust.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Confidentiality and Security

Staff may have access to confidential information about children and this is governed by The General Data Protection Regulations (2018). Staff must be clear about:

- Treating information in a discreet and confidential manner
- Knowing when and what information can be shared
- Seeking advice from the School Leader if they are in any doubt
- Who to report any concerns / allegations to

Staff are expected to have an awareness and high regard for the confidential, sensitive and important nature of their role and must be mindful of this at all times including during formal and informal discussions with parents, other members of staff, children and the wider school community. Particular attention should be paid in public areas of the school such as corridors, the playground and the staff room.

A 'need to know' approach should be adopted to safeguard this principal and to ensure that no child or group of children is unfairly stereotyped or unnecessarily spotlighted. Where possible, no names should be explicitly mentioned whether for positive, negative or information purposes in public areas, unless this is specifically on a need to know basis for all present to hear.

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

Confidential information about pupils must be held securely. Confidential information about pupils must not be held off site other than on security protected school equipment.

Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity and this includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

Staff are reminded that it is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that may be construed by others as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff i.e. at Christmas or as a thank you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind may be expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with school policy and not based on favouritism.

Making an Professional Judgement

Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably. Where there is no specific guidance staff should inform the School Leader of the circumstances any actions which could be misinterpreted, any misunderstandings, any disagreement about the course of action and records confirming decision, discussion and reasons should be made.

Power and Position of Trust

Staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' benefit. They should not intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children. They should not promote relationships which are of a sexual nature. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

Safeguarding of Children/Safeguarding Concerns

It is the duty of all staff to report any concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or alternatively to another member of the Safeguarding Team. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are given by a pupil. Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and should familiarise themselves with this document.

Safeguarding Declarations – Governed by the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

The regulations apply to all staff in all schools who work in, or are directly concerned with managing:

- Early years provision (birth until 1 September following a child's fifth birthday)
 - It covers staff who provide any care for a child up to and including reception age
 - It includes education in nursery and reception classes, and/or any supervised activity (such as breakfast clubs, lunchtime supervision and after-school care provided by the school) both during and outside school hours for children in the early years age range
- Later years provision (for children under 8)
 - It covers staff who work in childcare provided by a school outside school hours for children under 8, including before-school settings such as breakfast clubs, and after-school provision
 - It does not include education or supervision during school hours, or extended school hours for co-curricular learning activities such as the school's choir or sports teams

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Current staff would be covered by the checks that the school carried out during the recruitment process; however, it is a staff member's responsibility to declare, immediately, any caution, conviction or any other grounds for disqualification to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer/Headteacher, whether historical, current or happens in the future. It is a criminal offence not to do so.

Previously, people working in schools could be disqualified by association if they lived with someone who was disqualified. Since 31 August 2018, this no longer applies to schools.

Staff are no longer asked questions about cautions or convictions of someone living or working in their household.

New Appointments

Any new starters will be informed as part of the Trust's safer recruitment processes and asked to declare any relevant cautions and conviction.

What Offences are Covered by this Legislation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741597/APPENDICES-Disqualification_under_the_childcare_act_statguidance_4_.pdf

When a Member of Staff is Disqualified

If it becomes apparent that someone working in a relevant setting or role is disqualified the school will:

- Remove them from that role immediately
- Inform Ofsted at disqualification@ofsted.gov.uk
- Inform the staff member that they can apply to Ofsted for a waiver unless:
 - They're on the children's or adult's barred lists
 - They committed an offence against a child as defined by schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 and the court has ordered that they're disqualified

Inform them that when they apply for a waiver, they should provide Ofsted with the following information (if they know it):

- Details of the grounds for disqualification under the 2018 regulations (including any orders, determinations, cautions, or convictions)
- The date of the order, determination, caution, or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose
- The body or court which made the order, determination, caution or conviction, and the sentence imposed (if any)
- A certified copy of the relevant order

If they do not apply for a waiver, or a waiver is declined

The Trust/School will consider this and make decisions about:

- Whether the person can be permanently redeployed
- The appropriateness of redeployment
- Whether steps should be taken to legitimately terminate their employment

Sexual Contact with Children and Abuse of Trust

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff, volunteer or governor with or towards a child is illegal. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a pupil has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

Any physical contact with a pupil by a member of staff must only be in a way appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with pupils this should only be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact must never be secretive or casual or for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported.

Staff Dress Code

All staff must adhere to the specific school's dress code.

The Use of Personal Living Space

No child should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason has been established with parents / carers and the Head of School.

Compliance with School Policies

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with all school policies, procedures and statutory requirements and to adhere to these at all times.

Social Contact and Social Network

Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or trust or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate may render themselves vulnerable to criticism or to allegations of misconduct or disciplinary action.

Staff in school should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils or their families. This includes social networking and blogging. Even if a pupil seeks to establish social contact or should this occur coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise his or her professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact in person or on the internet could be misconstrued and may place members of staff in a very vulnerable position.

Staff and volunteers must not give their personal details such as home or mobile phone number, home address or email address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed with the Head of School.

Professional Relationships

With pupils:

All pupils and their families have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment or language to punish or undermine a pupil or family member. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils and their families is not acceptable in any situation. When speaking to pupils we must always consider how we would expect to be spoken to ourselves.

With other members of staff:

All staff should act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of their relative position or status within the school hierarchy, for example:

- By speaking politely to one another
- Being approachable, friendly and welcoming to other adults in school, both staff members and visitors alike
- Being flexible and understanding of unexpected changes within the school day
- Communicating clearly and honestly
- Addressing concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed, whenever possible
- By taking responsibility for our actions and being prepared to apologise when we have made mistakes and undertaking to learn from those errors

- To never deliberately discriminate or ostracise another member of staff
- By supporting the professional development of all colleagues

Conduct Outside Work

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

Support Staff on grade 6 or below may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, providing this does not conflict with the interests of the school of trust nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Absence

Reporting requirements should be followed for your individual school

If you are sick, you must fill in a self-certification form when you return. If your sickness continues for 8 calendar days or more you must obtain a certificate from your Doctor and send it to the office. You must also co-operate with return to work interviews, trigger level interviews, second stage meetings and any other formal meetings/hearings or occupational health service appointments concerning your sickness absence or fitness for work. Failure to comply with any of these requirements can result in you losing entitlement to sick pay and/or disciplinary action.

Whistleblowing

Staff should be aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff.

They should report any behaviour by colleagues that causes concern regardless of the source.

Disciplinary Action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Further information can be found in the TTLT Disciplinary Procedure for all staff.