STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved By: Trust Board
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CONTENTS

SECTION 1: AIMS, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This Code of Conduct aims to set and maintain minimum standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure the Trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

It should be read in conjunction with the full range of policies established by the Trust and at school level, all of which are made available to staff during their employment.

Staff have an influential position in our schools and should act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards as published by the Department for Education. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in this document.

We expect all support staff, trustees, local governors, and other volunteers 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.

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, the School and its students.

SECTION 2: GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

Staff are expected to set an example to students. At all times 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 students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.

SECTION 3: SAFEGUARDING

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

Please see the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further details.

SECTION 4: LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with any part of this Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children.

- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Humiliating children.

Low-level concerns may arise from a number of sources. These include, but are not limited to general suspicion, a complaint, a disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the school, or as a result of vetting checks.

Ensuring concerns are dealt with effectively should also protect those working within or on behalf of schools from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

Permanent staff members should report concerns either as a self-referral or a concern regarding a colleague via the CPOMs StaffSafe platform. This report will go to one of the following people responsible for safeguarding, who will follow the process as set out in the Trust's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy:

- Concerns about staff will go to the Headteacher & DSL
- Concerns about the DSL will go to the Headteacher
- Concerns about the Headteacher will go to the CEO
- Concerns about the CEO will go to the Safeguarding Link Trustee

Casual staff members (i.e. exam invigilators) should report concerns in person or in writing to their line manager, or Headteacher, or DSL for the school.

Volunteers should report their concerns in person or in writing to the Headteacher or DSL in the school.

SECTION 5: WHISTLEBLOWING

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

- Pupils' or staffs' 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 whistleblowing 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.

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.

Please see the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy for further details.

SECTION 6: STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

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

If staff members and students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff should 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 students outside of school hours if possible. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles.

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

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a student, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to students. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students 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 students or their parents via social media, or any other means outside of the Trust, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They should not make any efforts to find students' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff should ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students within the Trust without their consent.

Please see the Trust's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy for further details.

SECTION 8: ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Staff should not use technology on site or belonging to the Trust 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 personal mobile phones and laptops, or Trust equipment for personal use within school hours or in front of pupils. They should also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the IT systems used within schools.

Please see the Trust's IT Policy for further details.

SECTION 9: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety is paramount to ensure an effective learning and working environment. Staff members should:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the Trust (and school's own) Health and Safety Policy and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.

Please see the Trust's Health & Safety Policy and associated school-level Health & Safety Policy for further details.

SECTION 10: CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of their role, staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, its schools, staff, students 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 a staff duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Please see the Trust's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy for further details.

SECTION 11: HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with students, handling money, claiming expenses and using the Trust's property and facilities.

Staff members are required to declare their interests where a group or organisation would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos or activities of the Trust. This should be done in writing to the Headteacher or another senior member of staff within the Trust.

Staff must not accept bribes. Gifts must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Please see the Trust's Gifts & Hospitality Policy and the Staff Expenses Policy for further details.

SECTION 12: DRESS CODE

Staff should dress in a professional, appropriate manner for their role. Each school will be responsible for setting its own dress code appropriate to its ethos and requirements.