



Staff Code of Conduct

Our Vision

Formation - Inspiration - Transformation

Our Mission

We develop individual excellence, embrace opportunities and build strong communities with Gospel Values at the heart.

Our Values

Respect - Innovation - Courage - Trust



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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour for all staff so they know what is expected of them and are treated fairly. Trust staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within its schools and their community.

The Trust requires that all staff, including volunteers and governors read (and if necessary seek clarification) and understand this Code of Conduct, as everyone is required to comply with it. If they do not, the Trust may take disciplinary action against them in accordance with its disciplinary policy.

This document complements statutory guidance on safeguarding and profession standards including the Teacher Standards and should form part of a new employee's induction. Staff will be consulted upon any changes to this Code of Conduct will be asked to confirm that they have received/accessed the document.

2. GENERAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

It is not possible to provide examples of what is or is not appropriate behaviour and conduct in all circumstances. All Trust staff are expected to make responsible and reasonable decisions and act in the best interests of the Trust and the welfare of the students.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.

2.1 PERSONAL STANDARDS

The Trust expects the work, conduct, and integrity of all staff, including volunteers and governors to be of a high standard. Staff are accountable for their actions and must respect the management structure and ethos of the Trust.

2.2 DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

We prohibit you from drinking alcohol in the workplace, during your contracted hours or during [School/Academy/Trust] business, other than reasonable drinking of alcohol in connection with approved social functions. We regard drinking to an 'unreasonable level' as any of the following situations:

- in the opinion of management, your performance is impaired;
- in the opinion of management, your behaviour may cause embarrassment,

- distress or offence to others;
- you continue to drink when instructed to stop by a manager.

We will take all reasonable steps to prevent Staff carrying out work-related activities if you are considered to be unfit/unsafe to undertake the work as a result of alcohol consumption or substance abuse.

We expressly prohibit the use of any illegal drugs or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user. It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illicit substance. If any such incidents take place on [School/Academy/Trust] premises, in [School/Academy/Trust] vehicles or at an [School/Academy/Trust] related function, they will be regarded as serious, will be investigated by us, and may lead to disciplinary action and potential dismissal (or termination of your contract for non-employees) and possible reporting to the Police.

Staff or any other person under the [School/Academy/Trust]'s control must not, in connection with any work-related activity:

- be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (except prescribed medication for you) whilst at work, during contracted hours or whilst performing any duties;
- misuse and be under the adverse influence of substances whilst at work, during contracted hours or whilst performing any duties;
- attempt to sell or give drugs or alcohol to any other employee, staff, student or other person;
- be in possession of controlled drugs contrary to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended);
- operate machinery under the influence of drugs or alcohol. (There may be an exception for prescription drugs, provided they do not have an impact on performance whilst operating machinery);
- fail to inform your line manager if taking Prescription drugs or over the counter medication which may affect the ability to perform duties normally;
- drive vehicles whilst on [School/Academy/Trust] business whilst under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol or prescribed/over the counter drugs that may have an impact on your ability to drive safely;
- fail to follow instructions in relation to health and safety procedures for use and storage of solvents.

2.3 DRESS CODE

Staff are expected to take a safe and sensible approach to dress and appearance, cleanliness and personal hygiene and must present a positive image of the Trust and should act as a role model for students.

Please note staff must ensure that where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn as required.

Staff and management are encouraged to take a sensible approach to the suitability of 'work wear' in relation to the activity being undertaken.

The image that the Trust employees present to its students, their parents/carers and members of the public is important.

Although dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression, adults must dress appropriately for their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work in their own time.

You should therefore ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work you undertake. Those who dress in a manner, which could be considered as inappropriate, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

The Trust recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations.

All employees are required to be neat, clean and well-groomed while at work, whether working on the Trust's premises or elsewhere. Employees must adhere to the following standards, particularly when in contact with pupils, parents, carers, or outside agencies:

- Smart business dress, or uniform provided.

Although this list is non-exhaustive, certain items that are not permitted at work are:

- scruffy/torn trousers or jeans;
- micro- or very short miniskirts;
- low cut t-shirts, blouses and transparent clothing;
- shorts; unless appropriate length shorts are agreed for supporting PE, an inset day or in hot weather conditions;
- sports clothing, for example tracksuits, and shorts; unless supporting PE
- sweatshirts or t-shirts with slogans or symbols that could cause offence;
- badges/emblems or any other items or accessories, e.g wrist bands or similar jewellery items, associated with political parties or organisations.

The Trust reserves the right to apply their discretion when directing on appropriate or non permitted work wear / accessories.

Employees who are required to wear a uniform

Employees who are required to wear a uniform must ensure that they do so during working hours, unless advised otherwise by their manager. Uniforms must always be clean and worn in a presentable fashion. The uniforms issued must not be altered in any way without the Trust's permission.

2.4 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Trust recognises that employees who work together may form personal friendships and in some cases close personal relationships. While it does not wish to interfere with these personal relationships, it is necessary to ensure that all staff behave in an appropriate and professional manner at work.

Any member of staff who is involved in a close personal relationship with a colleague, contractor or supplier must not allow that relationship to influence his/her conduct while at work.

2.5 CONDUCT WITH PUPILS

High standards of behaviour will be expected and promoted at all times in lessons and throughout every aspect of a school's life. All members of staff and governors are expected to set high standards and use a positive approach to behaviour management.

2.6 CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must **never** promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

2.7 USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The school is entitled to expect at least the same standard of care of its property as employees give to their own property. Any facilities, property or equipment provided by the school should only be used in connection with official duties except where the

Head of School and governors have agreed to private use.

When a member of staff ceases working for the school, papers and other records, equipment and any other property of the school must be returned. This includes all paper and electronic records relating to the school and any students.

2.8 USE OF MOBILE PHONES

As a general rule, staff are not allowed to make and receive calls, or send texts when working with students. Use of mobile phones should be limited to lunchtime or during breaks.

2.9 USE OF SCHOOL AND PERSONAL VEHICLES

Staff and governors should never give lifts to pupils without clearing it with a senior member of staff. Two members of staff should accompany any children in cars where possible. School policy in relation to transport and travel must be adhered to at all times.

2.10 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

School staff are permitted to accept gifts and hospitality of a minor nature such as small gifts from parents or pupils to staff as a token of appreciation or promotional items from suppliers that are routinely given to a wide range of people (e.g. calendars, notepads, pens, etc).

Gifts with an estimated value exceeding £25 should be referred to the Head of School and may only be accepted with express permission.

Please see Gifts and Hospitality policy for further detail.

2.11 CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work that 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.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must adhere to the school's procedures on social networking and e-safety.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level that may

contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

2.12 WORK RELATED SOCIAL EVENTS

Although work related social events usually take place away from the school and on occasion, outside of normal working hours, this code of conduct applies to such events. Staff must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring the Trust's name into disrepute.

2.13 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

All employees, workers, learners and volunteers and anyone operating on behalf of the Academy or visiting the Academy have the right to feel safe on our premises or while carrying out activities in relation to the Academy. No one should be hurt or abuse anyone in any way.

Staff must always:

- respect other people's right to safety;
- not hurt or abuse others; and not threaten to hurt or abuse them;
- comply with our pre- and post-employment vetting procedures;
- advise your line manager if you are under investigation by the Police or other authority in connection with allegations of abuse;
- advise the nominated officer if you are aware or have any suspicions that anyone is abusing another person;
- comply with our procedure on Safeguarding Children.

2.14 RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS

Staff must at all times:

- maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably;
- act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent;
- think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised;
- be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Staff must never:

- establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be

misconstrued;

- develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student;
- make sexual remarks to a student, discuss your own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Contact with students should be through the Academy's authorised mechanisms. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and you should not share your home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route you must inform the [Headteacher/ Head of School immediately.

You must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of the Academy on any social media platform. You should also refrain from following any student on Twitter, Instagram or other similar social media accounts of students or their parents.

Low-level concerns

In line with Section Two of Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education, we recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns with the right person so that they can be addressed appropriately. The purpose of our approach to low-level concerns is to ensure that our values are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by staff.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that the concern is insignificant. A low-level concern covers any concern no matter how small, even if it is no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and;
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered 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 a personal mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- humiliating pupils.

Such behaviour can exist on a spectrum. It is essential that these concerns are shared as

outlined to support the academy's ethos and values and promote a culture of vigilance and transparency around the expected behaviour of staff.

Low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer or contractor should be reported to the Headteacher/ Head of School **OR** Designated Safeguard Lead .

Any concerns about the Headteacher/ Head of School **OR** Designated Safeguard Lead should be reported to the Chair of Governors **OR** Chair of the Board of Directors.

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. Each record will include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual who raised the concern should be noted, but if that individual wishes to remain anonymous, that will be respected to the extent it is reasonably possible to do so.

Records will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or by referring to the LADO, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold. We will also consider whether there are wider cultural issues existing in the school that may have enabled the behaviour to occur. If this is found to be the case or a contributory factor, we may review our policies and deliver extra training where we consider this will minimise the events happening again.

2.15 E-SAFETY

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must ensure that they comply with the Trust's ICT Security policies at all times. These can be found at www.hfcmat.co.uk

2.16 DATA PROTECTION

Staff and governors should not disclose any information about pupils, staff colleagues or governors to members of the public. Only approved staff and governors should communicate to the media about school/Trust.

All personal data must be kept secure. The storage of data on a hard disk or memory stick is insecure. To make such storage more secure it is recommended that it is password protected or encrypted. The safest long-term storage of data would be via a school's identified shared area.

Staff must ensure that school policy is fully adhered to when taking photographs of children.

3. BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with the Trust's published procedures. HFCMAT's Staff Disciplinary Policy can be found at www.hfcmat.com.