



Whole School Staff Code of Conduct

2022-2023

Review Date: August 2023

Responsible: Board of Directors

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 associated policies and the Teachers' Standards.

1.2 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 unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager (or *the headteacher*).

1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time, but should be seen as supplementing our employees' terms and conditions of service as laid out in their conditions of service.

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 outside of work can impact on their employment. Conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.

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 Employees must have fully read and understood our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and follow the guidance at all times.

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 children's 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 and lead by example.

5 Health and Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- read and understand the school's health and safety policy
- comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the school
- 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 school community or visitors

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 school.

6.2 Employees maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating children 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 children's well-being
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British and Spanish values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and being tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit children's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

6.3 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our school and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

6.4 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

7 Tackling Discrimination

7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that children and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our equality and anti-bullying policies.

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

8 Professional Boundaries and Relationships

8.1 Employees in our school are in a position of trust in relation to our children which means that the relationship between an employee and a child is not one of equals.

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 children.

8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any children or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children. Employees must not discuss a child's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any child 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 child and should not allow children to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Children are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for children 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 school's Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 school, we expect that they identify this to the headteacher and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

9 Confidentiality and Protection of Data

9.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about children, colleagues or other matters relating to the school. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a child'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 school's safeguarding lead.

9.3 The school holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the school'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.

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

10 Physical Contact with Children

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

10.2 There may also be occasions where a child 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 school's safeguarding lead.

10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with children to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

10.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with children is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

11 Social Contact with Children

11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with children 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 children for professional school related reasons. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers or email address to any child then they should report this to the headteacher.

11.2 The school's advice to staff is not to connect to children 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 school is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will encounter children outside of the school. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the headteacher(s) any contact that they have had with a child, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

12 Working One to One with Children

12.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a child and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. It is important, therefore, 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 child becomes distressed or angry.

13 Dress and appearance

13.1 Employees are role models to our children and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. Staff are expected to follow the school Dress Code.

13.2 Staff in practical subjects may choose to wear clothing more suitable to the nature of their work or where appropriate, to wear protective clothing such as lab coats or overalls or, in the case of PE, tracksuits.

13.3 For out of school activities, staff should dress appropriately for the activity. Generally, if pupils are required to wear school uniform then so are staff.

13.5 Piercings and tattoos

As role models for children and young people, staff should therefore ensure that piercings are discrete and that tattoos are not displayed but covered where practicable, particularly on formal occasions.

14 Gifts and hospitality

For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes.

It is traditional for children and their parents or carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from children and their parents or carers if they meet this definition. Staff should make the headteacher aware of any child who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any child or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable. Staff should not give gifts to children unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy.

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 school or which makes them unsuitable for their work. This includes, for example:
 - o submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
 - o breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - o sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - o crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
- Write and tell the headteacher(s) (or the School Directors if they are the headteacher) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime while they are employed at the school (this includes outside of their working hours). The headteacher(s) /Directors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the school 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 school 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 school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school 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. Alcohol/drugs

17.1 All school employees should ensure that they report fit for work and remain fit to perform their duties. The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on school premises unless specifically approved by the headteacher and never during school session times. The school prohibits the use, possession, distribution or sale of drugs at the work-place, or when conducting school business.

17.2 Where it is established that there is an alcohol or drug dependency problem, this will be considered as a treatable illness and the headteacher will provide assistance wherever possible. Where an employee refuses help or drops out of a treatment programme this will not be automatic grounds for dismissal, however, any unacceptable behaviour or level of performance thereafter will be subject to appropriate action.

18. Additional employment

18.1 The school will not prevent an employee from undertaking additional employment providing it does not conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in the school and does not in any way affect performance of their duties and responsibilities while he/she is at work. Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

18.2 A related issue concerns payment received by employees for work which arises principally because of work-related skills and is carried out for private purposes during working hours (by prior agreement), or annual or special leave and during periods of school closure, or when using school information, equipment or facilities. Examples might be when an employee writes a book using information belonging to the school, an employee who marks examination papers during annual leave periods or an employee who produces computer software which is capable of being marketed outside the school for profit. The question then arises of who should retain payments for such work (i.e. the school, the employee or a split between the school and the employee). Should an instance of this nature arise employees should consult the headteacher who will decide regarding the acceptability of the project and, if applicable, how resultant payments will be handled, prior to commencement of any such work. It may be necessary for the headteacher to take advice from the School Directors.

19. Promotional sales/benefits

19.1 Offers from companies of promotional sales should be declined. Employees should bring such matters to the attention of the headteacher(s) in order that a decision can be made as to whether it is appropriate to inform the director of finance, administration and resources who can write to the company concerned, indicating that improved discounts are the only form of promotion acceptable to the school.

19.2 The use of personal loyalty cards while making purchases on behalf of the school is also unacceptable. It may bring into question the impartiality of the use of that supplier.

20. Sponsorship

20.1 Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender negotiation or voluntarily, the conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

20.2 From time to time a local authority or a business sponsors or gives grants for sporting and cultural events such as exhibitions, plays or performances or games. The general rule is that no employee nor any partner, spouse or relative associated with the school shall receive any benefit from such sponsorship or grant in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the head.

21. Appointment of staff

21.1 An employee must not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative or friend.

21.2 'Relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons. 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together.

21.3 Employees involved in appointments should ensure that those appointments are made only based on merit. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment (which includes involvement in any part of the selection process) where they are related to an applicant, or have a personal relationship with him or her outside of work.

21.4 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, etc.

Employees must declare a personal relationship and if it is thought that a potential conflict of interest arises, arrangements should be made to re-organise the work of both parties.

22 Associated policies

- Technology Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Staff Handbook
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- SEN policy

23 Review

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended every two years by the school. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.