



**THE  
DIOCESE OF  
SHEFFIELD  
ACADEMIES  
TRUST**

# Staff Code of Conduct

*Signed off by: DSAT Trust Board*

*Date from: November 2023*

*Review Date November 2024*

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## 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The Trust (DSAT) and governors believe that you are responsible for your own actions. That means it is your responsibility to read the Code of Conduct and any other code which may apply to your job.

If there are any parts of this Code, or other codes of practice that you are unsure of or do not understand, you must seek clarification from your Headteacher/line manager or DSAT People Director.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, local school board members and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. All staff working in school have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. No member, trustee, local school board member, employee or related individual or organisation should use their connection to the trust for personal gain.

As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of Trust employees outside of work, including on social media, can impact on their employment and therefore, inappropriate behaviour and conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter under the Trust Disciplinary Policy if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that 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 school and its pupils.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media. See also our policies on Acceptable Use and Social Media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. General obligations

Staff will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and other colleagues and members of the public 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 pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the 7 principles of public life also known as the Nolan Principles (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) to which public office holders must adhere.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

## 4. Safeguarding

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

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Staff will receive regular safeguarding training.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available from the school office, as well as in the policies section of our school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### **4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

The school will ensure that low level concerns are dealt with effectively and also protect those working in schools from potential false allegations or misunderstandings. We encourage anyone with a concern, no matter how small, to report to the Headteacher and all low level concerns will be recorded and dealt with appropriately.

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language i.e. sexualised, intimidating or offensive

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have to the Headteacher, using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available from the school office, as well as in the policies section of our school website.

## **5. Staff-pupil relationships**

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

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

This takes place in a public place that others can access

Others can see in to the room

A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable unless part of an agreed school reward system or a small token gift that is given consistently without prejudice, e.g. a chocolate to all pupils in a class at Easter.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our safeguarding policy.

## 6. Communication and social media

Communication should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private, including message settings.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of and comply with the school's e-safety policy and social media policy.

## 7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff Acceptable Use is set out in our e-safety policy and all staff will be expected to read and sign the agreement. Staff will not use technology in school 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 will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use at any time in front of pupils. Personal use of mobile phones or laptops should only be in their own time, for example during lunch break, and never when any pupils may be present. They will 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 school IT system.

## 8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils 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 staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## 9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)

- Qualifications

- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## 10. Dress code

As an employee at the school, staff are a representative of the school, and must dress in a way that is appropriate, or required, for the workplace and the work they are doing. Staff must be clean and tidy and make sure they have good personal hygiene. Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans, should not be over-revealing and we ask that tattoos are covered up where feasible. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work..

If staff are provided with official clothing for uniform, or health and safety and/or hygiene reasons, they must wear it. This includes a name badge and other identity badges where provided and in line with school policy.

## 11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, inappropriate or unwanted conduct towards other colleagues or members of the public, as well as negative comments about the school and trust on social media.

## 12. Tackling discrimination

Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that pupils and colleagues may be subject to. 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.

## 13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the board of trustees.

Our school will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## 14. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding policy
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety