



Staff Code of Conduct
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Reviewed by Trust Board March 2021
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STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

1. Background and principles

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a Code of Conduct framework for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between staff, leaders and parents/carers.

1.2. When parents or any third party have occasion to visit or phone the school, we ask them all to respect our members of staff, volunteers, Trustees and Governors and to remain civil at all times and to not use any abusive language or threatening behaviour. Should staff find themselves subjected to such behaviours they should inform the relevant Headteacher immediately.

1.3. It is the responsibility of all those working within the Learning Trust, in any form, to familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct. Failure to observe any of the standards within the Staff Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action in line with the Learning Trust's Disciplinary Policy, which could in the most extreme circumstances lead to dismissal.

1.4. The Staff Code of Conduct applies to all The Trust's employees and those carrying out work on behalf of the Trust, including, but not limited to, Members, Trustees, Governors, teachers, support staff, volunteers, temporary or interim staff and visiting staff (including supply staff, consultants, business partners and contractors) working with students on and off-site and requires that these adults will always:

- place the welfare of students as their first and foremost priority;
- accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- at all times behave in a manner which does not bring the Trust into disrepute;
- work in an open and transparent way;
- make a record of any incident and promptly consult their line manager;

- apply the same professional standards regardless of age, religion or belief, gender assignment, race, marriage or civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation or disability;
- be aware of the name (and contact details) of the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding students and understand their responsibilities under the safeguarding / child protection policy;
- understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring; and
- understand their responsibilities to report any unprofessional conduct of other adults working in or on behalf of the Learning Trust focusing at all times on the welfare of students.

1.5 It is imperative that all teachers, support staff, volunteers, visiting staff, Trustees and Governors act in accordance with the Trust's and local schools' Safeguarding, Behaviour and Child Protection Policies. If staff have any concerns, they should immediately contact the relevant Safeguarding Lead and provide details.

2. Confidentiality

2.1. Staff must not use confidential or sensitive information about a child or their family for their own benefit or to humiliate or embarrass a child.

2.2. Confidential information about students or the Trust and its schools should not be shared casually and must be kept confidential at all time. Please refer to the Trust's and schools' Data Protection policy for further information.

2.3. Information that might suggest that a child is in need or at risk of significant harm must be shared with the Designated Person immediately, in accordance with the safeguarding / child protection procedures.

3. Behaviour

3.1. Staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence and must uphold high standards of personal conduct to do so; both within and outside of their work setting.

3.2. Staff are expected to behave in a professional and polite manner at all times.

3.3. Staff must not do or say anything that might bring the Learning Trust or local schools into disrepute.

4. Dress and appearance

4.1. Staff must be smart in their appearance and portray the appropriate image at all times. If guidance is required as to what is appropriate contact should be made with the relevant Headteacher or CEO.

4.2. Staff should dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role. The individual schools will make reasonable adjustments to uniform expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions and cultural beliefs.

5. Gifts

5.1. Whilst there may be occasions when parents or students may wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example, at Christmas or the end of a school term/year, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis.

5.2. Personal gifts should not be given by staff to students and any reward to a child should be consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded and not based upon favouritism.

5.3. If unsure of whether to accept a gift, please refer to the relevant Headteacher.

6. Infatuations

6.1. It is not unusual for students or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations or "crushes" towards trusted staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively in order to maintain the dignity of those concerned and any indications that this might be happening should be immediately reported to the relevant line manager.

7. Social contact

7.1. Staff should not establish or seek to establish any non-professional social contact with a student or their parents/carers.

7.2. All unplanned or other social contact that happens outside of the school setting should be reported to the Headteacher/Principal.

7.3. Staff should not give their personal telephone numbers, email addresses or any contact details through social media to students or their parents/ carers, unless agreed in advance with the Headteacher and when it is required within their role.

7.4. No member of staff will enter into extra or private tuition or childcare arrangements with parents/carers without the permission of the relevant Headteacher.

7.5. Staff should notify their line manager immediately of any existing or previous family or social relationship with a student or their parents/carers.

8. Physical contact

8.1. When physical contact is made with students, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. If guidance is required on this contact should be made with the Safeguarding Lead.

- 8.2. Physical contact should never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. It should be in accordance with the principle of 'limited touch'.
- 8.3. Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Staff should notify their line manager or the relevant Safeguarding Lead immediately when such signs or behaviour is apparent.
- 8.4. Any extreme attention-seeking or behaviour by students that makes a member of staff feel uncomfortable should be reported to a line manager.
- 8.5. Staff supervising PE and games or providing music tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with students; the principle of "limited touch" should be applied, with understanding of the student's sensitivities and with the student's agreement.
- 8.6. Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering, for example, after games or swimming.

9. Students in distress

- 9.1. On those occasions when a student may be in distress and in need of comfort and reassurance, staff should ensure that they remain self-aware at all times and that their contact with the student is not open to misunderstanding.
- 9.2. Such incidents must always be immediately recorded and shared with a line manager.

10. Care, control and physical intervention

- 9.1. The Learning Trust is committed to the use of positive behaviour management and staff will not use any form of physical punishment, threats, sarcasm or demeaning comments to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- 9.2. When children need to be restrained for their own protection or the protection of others, this must only be undertaken in accordance with the training and policy sanctioned by the Leadership Team.
- 9.3. Any such incidents and physical interventions will be recorded and reported to parents/carers.

11. One to one situation

- 11.1. Staff working individually with children should recognise the potential vulnerability of students and adults in such situations and ensure that they manage these situations with regard to the safety of both the child and themselves.

11.2. Individual work with students should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external visual access. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

11.3. Staff are aware that the safety and welfare of pupils/students is the responsibility of the school until pupils/students are with their parents. The school is committed to taking all possible safety measures to ensure the safety of its pupils/students. When it is necessary to transport pupils/students off-site, staff will ensure that they:

- will only use their own vehicle to transport pupils/students where there is no practical or reasonable alternative, and where consent is obtained and recorded from the Headteacher and the parents in advance of the journey;
- a valid risk assessment for the journey must be in place;
- only members of staff with the appropriate level of DBS check and safeguarding and behaviour management training will be permitted to transport pupils/students;
- hold a full valid driving licence for the category of vehicle being driven and providing their licence details to the Headteacher where required;
- drive in accordance with the laws of the road and Highway Code;
- check before each journey that the vehicle is roadworthy, e.g. tyres are properly inflated and meet legal requirements;
- ensure that they are fit to drive; where their fitness to drive may be impaired, e.g. due to a medical condition or taking medication, they inform their line manager as soon as possible and notify the DVLA where required;
- Notify the Headteacher where there is any change in their circumstance in relation to driving at work, e.g. if they acquire penalty points on their licence for motoring offences outside of work;
- Where practically possible, two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns;
- staff will not offer pupils/students transport outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or if a pupil is at risk. These circumstances will be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and the pupil/student's parents.

11.4. All first aid will be administered only by suitably trained and accredited staff except in an emergency where the illness or injury is such that to delay assistance might cause harm to the child.

11.5. Children who require any form of intimate care are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety. Students with on-going health problems will be treated in accordance with any Medical Plan that has been agreed with the parent and the Health Authority and only by those who have been authorised to do so by the Headteacher.

11.6. Lone male or female members of staff will not be placed in a position where they are expected to provide any form of intimate care without the safeguard of having a colleague of the opposite sex in the same room or area where necessary.

12. Curriculum

12.1 Care should be taken to abide by The School's policy on Sex and Relationships Education and the wishes of parents.

12.2 The curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. Care should be exercised to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the lesson plan.

12.3 The curriculum can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion of sensitive subject matters. Responding to student's questions requires careful judgments and guidance should be sought from members of the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

13. Photography, videos and other creative arts

13.1. Whilst photographic and video images of students can play a valuable role within the curriculum, after-school activities and to celebrate achievement, there is potential for such images and opportunities to be misused by adults with ulterior motives.

13.2. Staff should be sensitive to the needs of students who may have been abused in this way or who appear uncomfortable when asked to participate in photography or filming. If staff become aware of such sensitivity it should be reported to their manager.

13.3. Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans.

13.4. Staff should be able to give account of the rationale behind any images of students that are in their possession. They should be stored securely and only used by those authorised to do so.

13.5. No images or video should be stored upon a staff member's personal device unless approved in advance by the relevant Headteacher.

13.6. Permission from students and their parents/carers for the use of images of students for publicity purposes is usually given through the admissions process. Staff must however ensure that each parent agrees to photographic images being taken. For most uses names of students must not be published.

14. Internet Use

14.1. Staff should follow the Trust policy on the use of computer equipment and should under no circumstances, access, or allow students to access, inappropriate material or images.

14.2. If students are found to have accessed such images, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

14.3. See Online Safety Policy/E-Safety Policy for full roles and responsibilities.

15. Whistleblowing

See separate policy.

NB: In all TLT policies, the use of the word 'Trustees' may also be read to mean 'Local Governors' and 'Headteacher' may also mean 'CEO' or "Principal" and vice versa

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