

# Code of Conduct for Staff Behaviour Policy

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## **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 Safer working practices guidelines, school rules and the Teachers' Standards.
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations each school has of them. 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 ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service excluding those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers, self-employed contractors and volunteers 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 of each school outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore 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. (Please refer to current safeguarding Policy.)
- 3.3 To do this employees must have fully read and understood our safeguarding policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.
- 3.4 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

## **4 Duty of care**

Staff must:

- Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests, ("Never do Nothing")
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- Be aware that their professional relationships between staff are important, and that these can often serve as a model for behaviour to students, therefore should any disputes arise

then conflict resolution should be sought.

## **5 Health & Safety**

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by each school as published on each schools intranet common area
- Read and understand the Multi Academy Trust's (MAT) Health and Safety Policy
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by each school.
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements, filling in accident forms or entering information on CPOMS.
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members in each school
- Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

## **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 each school.

6.2 Employees uphold public trust in each school and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside each school, by:

- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
- Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' 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 each 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 following the MAT'S procedures for handling and claiming money, and the use of each school's property and facilities.

## **7 Tackling discrimination**

7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Equality Policy.

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 each school are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student 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 students.
- 8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student 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 student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees friends and should not be treated as such.
- 8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students 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 their line manager 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 MAT, we expect that they identify this to the Executive Head 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 students, colleagues or other matters relating to each school. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student'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 their line manager.
- 9.3 Each school holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with each school's systems for collecting, storing and using data which is on our CPOMS system. 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 Executive Head.
- 9.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of our policies that relate to data including our IT policies.

## **10 Physical contact with students**

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

made physical contact with a student. Employees should ensure that they have read and understood our Physical Contact Policy.

- Staff are advised, as a general principle, not to make unnecessary physical conduct with pupils. This is particularly the case with Secondary aged pupils and maturing pupils in the Primary Department.
- Clearly many of us would be unable to carry out our job without having physical contact with the pupils and, indeed, the pupils would be unable to progress in many areas of their development or access many aspects of the curriculum without physical conduct. It is therefore necessary to differentiate between physical conduct that is in the best interest of the child and physical conduct that could be considered unnecessary.
- Physical contact which might be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Staff should ensure that their relationship with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupil, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to speculation or comment.

10.2 There may also be occasions where a student 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 DSP.

10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with students 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 students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **11 Social contact with students**

11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students or their parents 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 students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to the Executive Head.

11.2 The MAT's advice to staff is not to connect to students 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 Each school is part of its community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of each school. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to their line manager any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

11.4 Employees should read and understand our e safety policy

## **12 Working one to one with students**

12.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more

vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore it is important 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 student becomes distressed or angry.

### **13 Dress and appearance**

Working in our schools, employees are role models to our students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. We expect Teaching staff to wear smart professional clothing and Teaching assistants smart casual clothing. Also because of the number of wheelchairs we have in school appropriate footwear is important, which means sensible shoes and no open toed or backless shoes or sandals. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed.

### **14 Gifts and hospitality**

The MAT has an Anti-fraud / Gifts and Hospitality policy and employees should read and adhere to this

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. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for each school that exceeds a nominal value of £25.00 must be declared to the Executive Head and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

It is traditional for students 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 students and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value of greater than £25.00 should inform the Executive Head who will then decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make their line manager aware of any student who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any student or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

Staff should not give gifts to students 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 MAT, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
  - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
  - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
  - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
  - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
- Write and tell the Executive Head or MAT Trust Board if they are the Executive Head immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed by the MAT (this includes outside of their working hours). The Executive Head and/or trustees will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the MAT 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 one of our schools 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 each school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of each school community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within each school or affect each 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 each 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 Review**

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended every 3 years by the MAT. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.

Reviewed September 2020

Next review September 2023