

The 3-18 Education Trust

KCSiE Staff Code of Conduct

Every individual is in a great school.

Approved: **Autumn Term 2023**



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Introduction

The vision for The 3-18 Education Trust (Trust) is that every individual is in a great school and as such its teachers and support staff set the highest standards for the educational provision and achievement across the Trust. With this, the Trust expects all staff to grow as professionals and to exercise professional conduct at all times.

The word 'professional' is used deliberately to remind staff that by working across the Trust and/or in a school, your conduct is a reflection of you, your school and your profession. It is a profession we are rightly proud of, and we protect and enhance its reputation by our conduct as professionals within it.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

All Trust staff (whether employed, working on a casual basis, agency staff or volunteering) have personal, professional and legal responsibilities, including treating others with dignity and respect, acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and safeguarding pupils at all times. The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of pupils in their charge and must act in the role of replacement parent in the school context. Individuals are expected to make decisions or take action in the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge.

The code of conduct sets out:

- The minimum required standards of behaviour that are required for any individual working in any capacity in any of the Trust's schools or offices.
- The principal areas and responsibilities that any individual working in any capacity in any Trust school or offices need to be aware of when working in any Trust school or offices and the parameters of the framework for appropriate and safe behaviour.
- The possible outcome of non-compliance with the code of conduct.

It is impossible for the Code of Conduct to be able to address every variation of a situation or scenario that may present itself in the context of staff and volunteers and their conduct in role.

If in doubt, the Headteacher (for school staff) or Chief Executive Officer (for Central Team staff) in association with HR, should be consulted for advice before taking any action.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Headteachers within the Trust's schools to ensure that structures are in place to support the effective implementations of this code of conduct and to monitor standards of professional behaviour. The CEO and Headteacher should also be familiar with all policies including safeguarding and other statutory guidance that underpin expected behaviours, referred to throughout the code of conduct.

Teachers must be mindful of the additional expectations placed on them by the [Teachers Standards](#).

Employees, casual workers, agency staff, volunteers, work experience and interns should ensure they are familiar with all Trust policies including safeguarding and statutory guidance that underpin expected professional behaviours, referred to throughout the code of conduct, and should be made available by the Headteacher within each school and the Chief Executive Officer (for Central Team staff).

Scope

This code of conduct refers to all staff including employees, casual workers, volunteers, work experience and interns. Contractors and agency staff will be expected to follow the spirit of this code in their professional dealings with the provision of services to the Trust.

General Principles (10 Expectations of Professional Conduct)

All people working in or employed by the Trust will:

- Show good manners, courtesy towards others and uphold the reputation of the Trust – this will reflect upon our pupils. Conduct relating to pupils, staff, those working in the Trust and partners in education is therefore expected to meet the role-model ethos of the Trust and should be exemplary.
- Form appropriate relationships with members of the school community based on mutual trust and respect, by treating pupils and staff with respect, dignity and equally. This includes exercising appropriate authority when pupils display challenging behaviour. Staff must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and equitable in their application.
- Ensure contact and communication with pupils takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.
- Contribute to the learning and development of both pupils and staff by providing accurate and constructive comments when assessing performance.
- Use appropriate channels to raise concerns about the behaviour, practice or welfare of others if it has a negative impact on any aspect of Trust community.
- Have regard for the need to safeguard pupils well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions and local procedures.
- Celebrate the diversity and challenge prejudice, in accordance with statutory provisions and local procedures, within our Trust community
- Have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out our professional duties and responsibilities.
- Take responsibility for understanding and complying with national guidelines and legislation and Trust Policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, and bullying and harassment.
- Ensure that our conduct (at work or outside) and appearance at work whilst representing the Trust, reflects positively on the Trust and maintains the dignity of the Trust community. Be mindful that pupils have a uniform and they are required to follow and adhere to the expectations that a uniform brings. Staff must be mindful that, whilst in the employment of the Trust, all of our expectations apply, and this includes after school hours, weekends and holiday time.

Specific Principles

Covid 19 Principles (extra section inserted from September 2020)

All school staff should:

- Adhere to the requirements as identified in the school risk assessment and communications from your school, which may be subject to change following update government guidance.

Safeguarding Pupils

All staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from all forms of:

- Abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse and
- Neglect

A formal definition of 'safeguarding and promoting welfare of pupils' is set out in KCSiE 2023 (p6)

Staff have a duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Safeguarding responsibility applies to all who have contact with pupils. It must be pupil centered, concerns identified early and help provided to prevent concerns escalating.

The Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the school will be confirmed to you and the School's DSL information is permanently and prominently displayed in the school office/reception area and staff room.

Staff must be familiar with all of the Trust's HR policies and actively engaged with all school based policies.

Low-Level Concerns (as identified by KCSiE)

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. All staff have a duty to identify low-level concerns, which is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with this code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and;
- may not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

KCSiE provide examples of such behaviour, which could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with pupils;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of pupils on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy;
- engaging with a pupil on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating pupils

The Trust considers that all concerns and all matters arising from them require a full-fact finding exercise to be carried out to determine whether any disciplinary action is required.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a pupil, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is crucial that a culture of openness and transparency is present within all schools and offices across the Trust and any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (the harm test is explained on the Disclosure and Barring service website on GOV.UK. Section 31(9) of the Pupils Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Pupils Act 2002) are shared responsibly and with the DSL, Headteacher/CEO and Trust HR and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of the Trust from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Physical Contact

There are occasions where it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each pupil. Pupils with special needs may require more physical contact to assist with their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the pupil's needs, recorded, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

There may be times when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive, or subject to misinterpretation. Where a member of staff has a concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should speak to the DSL.

Staff should be aware that even good intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. A pupil must never be touched in a way that may be considered indecent. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. Horseplay, tickling or fun fights with pupils must never take place. Staff should always be aware that they should be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

Other Activities That Require Physical Contact

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with pupils, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a pupil so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil.

Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and adults should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil. Guidance and protocols around safe

and appropriate physical contact may be provided, for example, by sports' governing bodies and should be understood and applied consistently.

Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern or fall outside of these protocols and guidance should be reported to a senior manager and parent or carer. It is good practice that all parties clearly understand at the outset, what physical contact is necessary and appropriate in undertaking specific activities. Keeping parents/carers and pupils informed of the extent and nature of any physical contact may also prevent allegations of misconduct or abuse arising.

Communications with Pupils and all Stakeholders

All staff must pay close regard to the professional tone we employ with pupils at all times both in work and outside of work when we may come into contact with pupils. This refers to every medium of communication – how we speak to them in corridors, on the games field, in the classroom, as they walk into school; what we say in written feedback; how we address them through the application of Teams or email (for example).

Conversations need to be respectful and sensitive, to give confidence in our young people of your support, guidance and care for them. The term 'banter' needs to be challenged at all times. Often unkindness can be wrapped up and hidden through the excuse of 'it's just banter'. Abbreviated text speak, which is an accepted part of social media interaction must also not be used.

In short, we must not cross the boundaries of our relationship with pupils and become over-familiar and we should maintain a 'professional distance' at all times to role model this expected behaviour.

The above is also applicable to communications which take place between our staff and our other stakeholders.

Social Contact Outside of the Workplace

Staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm pupils often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the pupil and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the pupil and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, the member of staff should exercise their professional judgement and if they have any concerns, they must inform the Headteacher/ DSL as soon as possible. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Pupil Development

Staff must comply with policies and procedures which support the wellbeing and development of pupils. All staff have a responsibility to co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils. Reasonable instructions which support the development of pupils should be followed.

Intimate/Personal Care

Arrangements for intimate and personal care should be open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Schools and settings should have clear nappy or pad changing and intimate / personal care policies which ensure that the health, safety, independence and welfare of pupils is promoted, and their dignity and privacy are respected.

Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible.

Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's intimate care plan specifies the reason for this. A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned.

Any vulnerability, including those that may arise from a physical or learning difficulty should be considered when formulating the individual pupil's care plan. The views of parents, carers and the pupil, regardless of their age and understanding, should be actively sought in formulating the plan and in the necessary regular reviews of these arrangements. Any changes to the intimate care plan should be made in writing and without delay, even if the change in arrangements is temporary, e.g. due to staff shortages, changes to staff rotas etc. Intimate and personal care should not be carried out by an adult that the pupil does not know.

Anyone undertaking intimate / personal care in an education setting is in regulated activity and must have been checked against the relevant DBS barred list, even if the activity only happens once; this includes volunteers. Volunteers and visiting staff from other schools / agencies should not undertake care procedures without appropriate training.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Transporting Pupils

In certain situations, e.g. out of school activities or non-emergency medical reasons (regularly required in our Boarding provision) staff or volunteers will agree to transport pupils. Where possible and practical it is advisable that transport (ideally not in private vehicles) is provided and more than one adult is present and the pupil should always sit in the back of the car.

Consideration must be given to the potential distraction of the driver and the supervision of the passengers. A judgement should be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the pupil/ren. If any of them may require close supervision, then another adult should travel in the vehicle so that the driver is not distracted or compromised.

A designated member of staff should have responsibility for planning and arranging all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties which may arise. The nature of the journey,

destination, route, and expected time of arrival and return time should be discussed with the driver and recorded.

The designated member of staff should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, insured appropriately and ensure the maximum capacity is not exceeded and that the appropriate driving licence checks have been carried out. These checks are designed to ensure passenger, driver and vehicle safety.

Each school will provide additional Guidelines for Educational Visits and Journeys to help ensure each school and the Trust with accurate record keeping. The School's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will sign off on all trips and travel arrangements to make sure they comply with all legislation and good practice.

Staff should never offer to transport pupils outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean the pupil may be at risk. In these circumstances the matter should be recorded and reported to both their manager and the pupil's parent(s).

For boarding provision only: For other journeys, such as to collect a takeaway, at a weekend, there must always be at least two boarders with a member of staff.

Educational Visits, Residential Trips and Before/After School Clubs

Staff should be familiar with the school's guidelines on educational visits for detailed guidance on health and safety and safeguarding during visits.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours a more relaxed discipline or informal dress code may be acceptable. However, staff must remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. At least two members of staff should always be present, unless the Headteacher has agreed alternative arrangements. A risk assessment must be undertaken and parental consent must be given for their pupil to participate in the activity.

A responsible attitude to the consumption of alcohol by staff is a necessity. If staff are responsible for pupils i.e. on duty at a school trip or a residential or working with pupils out of hours e.g. school musical, then staff are not permitted to consume alcohol. Refer to Substance Misuse Policy.

Photography, Videos and Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images including images of pupils. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity or to celebrate achievement.

Staff must be aware of the potential for these to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given to how these activities are organised and undertaken.

Pupils who have previously been abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography or filming in a teaching environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any pupil who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Using images of pupils for publicity purposes will require consent from parent/carer. Images must not appear in a public place without such consent. A public place includes areas of the school where visitors have access. A list is shared with staff regarding photographic consent annually.

Images must only be taken on a school device or a device that is monitored and approved by the Headteacher. Any device used for images is subject to inspection by the Headteacher or a designated person and may be confiscated and passed to the police in the event of a concern being raised.

IT and Social Media

Electronic communication opens up opportunities for learning but may also put pupils at risk through cyber-bullying, grooming or plagiarism amongst others. Staff should comply with the Trust's E-safety Policy with regards to their acceptable online behaviour, their use of ICT equipment in school and acceptable levels of communication between pupils and adults to ensure there are clear explicit professional boundaries.

Additionally, staff should be mindful that their personal views shared on social media may have a negative impact or discredit their employment with the Trust or may affect the reputation or standing of the Trust, or other members of the Trust community. Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. The KCSiE statutory guidance has stated that schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on shortlisted candidates.

It is important that staff raise any concerns that they may have with the school/Trust directly with the Headteacher rather than on social media.

Staff should refer to the Trusts' E-safety Policy for specific guidance relating to their responsibilities surrounding social media.

Mobile Phone or Personal Device

Under no circumstances should staff have their mobile phone or personal device on their desk or on display in the classroom, unless specific permission has been given by the Headteacher.

Staff should refer to the Trust's policy on acceptable use of electronic devices and E-Safety Policy for specific guidance relating to their responsibilities with regards to use of mobile phones/electronic devices.

Deviation from the above policies may bring into question their suitability to work with pupils and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

Advice on Emailing Parents/Carers

Staff should avoid using their own staff e-mail address when contacting parents/carers and whenever possible, should use the telephone or central email address. At the discretion of the individual member of staff, they may choose to use their own staff email address, however, this should be carefully managed and they must consider that the use of their own staff email may open up further, sustained conversation that must be managed carefully. For example;

- Timing - sending and receiving e-mails in the evening or over the weekend may become an expectation, which is to be avoided as far as possible.
- Content - if you are intending to send images, or sharing challenging content, both of which may cause a reaction, please seek the advice of your line manager/SLT.

Using the telephone is preferable to e-mail. You may wish to write formally (e-mail is less formal, by definition). Such formality is increasingly rare and preserves a time-honoured professional distance. It also provides for further dialogue, but not via the instantaneous nature of e-mail. Should a member of staff receive content that they consider inappropriate, please refer this to a member of SLT immediately.

Staff should never communicate to parents/carers with their personal phone number or email address.

Use Of Social Media When Absent From Work On Grounds Of Sickness

When absent from work through sickness, care must be given to the use of social media and the perception of this from other members of staff who continue to be at work. This is most notable for those members of staff for whom your absence may have a direct impact, for example increased workload.

When absent from work, if there is a clear discrepancy between the member of staff's ill health and what the image portrays, for example if they are signed off with a musculoskeletal disorder and their posts suggest they are out dancing or rock climbing, then the genuineness of absence will be investigated and could result in disciplinary action.

The Use of Covert Recording

Staff must not make secret recordings of other staff, be it in an informal setting at work or in a meeting. If staff have concerns in the workplace, this should be raised with the appropriate line management.

Honesty and Integrity

High levels of honesty and integrity are expected from all Trust staff at all times. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities. Staff must be mindful that the Trust uses public money which must be spent considerately.

Contracted Hours of Work

All hours which are contracted and paid must be worked effectively. Additional hours must be approved by the line manager prior to being worked and being claimed for payment.

Use of School Materials and Equipment

Staff must not make personal use of materials and equipment provided for school use (such as stationery, photocopier, vehicles, etc.) unless authorised by the Headteacher/CEO. Electronic devices and software may only be used in line with Trust's Acceptable Use of IT Policy.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Headteacher.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that an employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the headteacher.

School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or immediately if requested to do so by the headteacher.

Handling Money

When handling money, receipts should be issued to the payer. Clear records of the money paid in or out of the school should be maintained, which are evidenced by receipts and invoices.

Probity of Records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Disposal of School Property

The Trust has a procedure for selling or disposing surplus equipment. If staff wish to acquire any item of equipment, they must inform their Headteacher. If the Headteacher wishes to acquire any item of property, they should inform the CEO.

If as part of an individual's role they are required to deal with the disposal of surplus property, and they wish to acquire an item either for their own use or for any organisation or body in which they have an interest, they must inform their Headteacher or the CEO before the disposal procedure has started and they must have no further dealings in the disposal of that item.

It is essential that staff are not given, or seem to be given, any preferential treatment.

Attendance and Punctuality

Staff must be punctual for the start and end of the day, for meetings, lessons (start and end) and other arranged school events, if required to be present. The guidelines for directed time are reviewed and published annually.

If the weather conditions are extreme, then staff are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend work, if they deem it safe to do so. Staff will be informed via a school communication about whether the school is open or closed.

In the event of a member of staff wishing to leave the school site during curriculum time, permission should be sought from the Headteacher, or in their absence, one of the SLT. In the event of a member of staff wishing to leave the school site during PPA time, the Headteacher or a

member of SLT should be informed on every occasion. Staff must inform the school office of your departure for health and safety purposes on all occasions.

Any planned absence must be agreed with the Headteacher (who reserves the right to refuse permission or grant permission as unpaid leave) in line with the Special Leave Policy.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

In carrying out their roles, staff may acquire information which has not been made public, or is confidential.

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or parents/carers, staff must not reveal this except to colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. In circumstances where the identity of the pupils does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information should be treated in a discrete and confidential manner.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping pupils safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of pupils. A member of staff will therefore be expected to share information about a pupil, such as when abuse is alleged or suspected. to the DSL without delay.

Additionally, confidential information relating to colleagues, events which occur within the School/Trust or the School/Trust in general, should not be passed to anyone not entitled to receive it, nor posted on any public forum, or social media sites.

If a member of staff is in any doubt whether to share information or keep it confidential guidance should be sought from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal queries should be passed to the Headteacher or CEO.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, the Trust must record any breaches of confidentiality and in certain cases report the breach to the Information Commissioner. Failure of Trust staff to observe the requirements of confidentiality and/or the Trust's Data Protection Policy may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Conduct Outside Work

All Trust staff are expected to show the highest possible standard of behaviour to pupils, parents/carers, colleagues and all other stakeholders in and out of school. All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

Although off duty hours are a personal concern, work and private interests must not conflict. Where this may occur a discussion with the Headteacher should take place to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

Staff must notify their Headteacher immediately of any police investigation, charge, caution or reprimand, fine or conviction. This information will be treated in confidence, but may result in

suspension, investigation and disciplinary action, including dismissal. Criminal convictions that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be viewed as unacceptable.

Staff should also take due regard to who they associate themselves with outside of work and their personal views, which may have a negative impact or discredit their employment with the Trust or may affect the reputation or standing of the Trust, or other members of the Trust community. Staff should also note the disqualification by association regulations by referring to the Trust's KCSiE: Pupilcare (Disqualification) Guidance for schools.

Staff may undertake paid or voluntary work outside of the Trust, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust or their performance at school. Activities including lectures, private tuition, publications or television/radio appearances should be notified to the Headteacher in advance if they relate to the activities of the School or Trust. The nature of any work cannot be seen to bring the school into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Health and Safety

Employers have duties towards their employees and others under Health and Safety legislation which requires them to take steps to provide a safe working environment for staff.

Legislation also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

Staff must act in accordance with the duty of care to ensure their own safety and welfare and that of pupils, colleagues and visitors at all times. It is not acceptable to attend work whilst under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medicine, which may affect their ability to care for pupils or carry out their duties. Please refer to the Substance Misuse Policy.

All schools and offices within the Trust are non-smoking sites and staff and contractors are not permitted to smoke on site.

If alcohol, drug or other substance usage impacts on a staff member's performance or behaviour, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

Accidents and near misses must always be reported in the Accident Reporting book – as a near miss may develop into a serious incident. Members of staff should refer to their school's Health and Safety Policy.

Dress and Appearance

Dress and appearance must be of a business professional nature that reflects the role of the individual, the activities they are involved with and health and safety requirements related to these. All pupils are expected to uphold the smart uniform requirements of their school and therefore, for the majority of staff, business attire is an expectation in order to role model for our young people, i.e. what you would wear for an interview.

The manner of dress and appearance should not cause offence or be discriminatory to others in the workplace. Consideration should be taken around type of shoes worn (to avoid any tripping hazards and the ability to exit the building and site swiftly in an emergency), lengths and tightness of skirt and trousers, the cut of any tops worn and number of buttons undone on shirts/blouses as

well as the appropriateness of accessories. The headteacher reserves the right to raise with an employee, the appropriateness of dress, where deemed necessary. Personal protective equipment must be worn where a risk assessment has indicated that it is appropriate.

Relationships at Work

Any personal relationship between staff must not be reflected in their professional relationship at school or across the Trust. Utmost discretion is required between staff in this respect.

Staff who are Parents at the School

The decision, by any member of staff, to choose any of the schools in the Trust for their pupils brings a responsibility for the manner in which staff (who are parents) engage with the school. Staff must be mindful of expressing their opinion/asking questions of other staff about their son/daughter's achievement, progress, behaviour in school. To avoid any compromised situations, and wherever possible, it is hoped that the partner of the member of staff will communicate with the school about their pupils. Where this is not possible, staff must exercise caution when discussing their pupils with other staff. Staff who are parents should only approach other staff with opportunities for praise.

In particular, staff who are parents of pupils at the Trust should:

- Not use information gained only as a member of staff to influence any part of their dialogue with school.
- Must act in a professional manner to their colleagues when decisions are taken about their pupils with which they disagree.

Personal Living Accommodation

Staff should never invite pupils to their living accommodation.

Awarding Contracts/Engaging Contractors and Suppliers

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against or favoured.

Staff who engage contractors/suppliers, supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors/suppliers and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors/suppliers should declare that relationship to the Headteacher or the CEO.

Staff should also tell their Headteacher or CEO if they, or a close relative, have a large number of shares in a Company with which it is likely that the school or Trust will be dealing and the investment recorded. This only applies where they have, or may reasonably be thought to have, a role on behalf of the School/Trust in selecting the source of supply or the quantity or specification of the goods or services of that company. It does not apply where they have invested some money in a relatively small number of shares (normally not exceeding a market value from time to time of £5,000 in a large company with which the Trust is doing business) (or in a small company where an individual's shareholding represents 20% or more of the company's equity).

If staff fail to disclose a private pecuniary interest in a contract with the School or Trust they may be committing a criminal offence.

Staff involved with the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the School/Trust. Staff must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

Gifts and Inducements

- **Gifts from parents and pupils**

It is unacceptable for staff to receive gifts on a regular basis or to accept any gift of significant value (£30+) from parents and/or pupils. Such offer should be discussed with the Headteacher or CEO prior to acceptance. Small inexpensive items such as flowers or chocolates may be accepted, however.

- **Gifts to pupils**

The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils by school staff should be part of an agreed policy or plan recorded and discussed with the Headteacher or CEO and the parent/carer of the pupil.

Staff should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and/or outside suppliers, although insignificant items of token value, such as pens or diaries, are acceptable.

- **Hospitality**

Staff should only accept hospitality from pupils/parents or carers or actual or potential contractors/suppliers (e.g. visits, meals, sporting events) if there is a genuine reason to impart information or represent the school or Trust in the local community. Offers of hospitality should be authorised by the Headteacher or CEO and recorded before being accepted, even if staff choose to pay to attend the activity themselves. Refusal by staff to attend should also be recorded.

- **Sponsorship**

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a School/Trust, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Care must be taken when dealing with contractors/suppliers or potential contractors/suppliers.

Where the School/Trust wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither staff nor any relative or those in a close personal relationship must benefit from such sponsorship, either directly or indirectly, without there being full disclosure to the Headteacher or the CEO of any such interest. Similarly, where the School/Trust through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, staff should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

- **Personal Purchases**

Caution should be exercised when for their personal use staff buy goods or use the services of suppliers which they know have dealings with the School/Trust.

Staff should not accept prices or terms for such goods or services which they believe may have been reduced for them personally because of the supplier's dealings with the School/Trust, similarly, they should not seek such reductions.

Staff should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage as an inducement to act in a certain way in their professional capacity. If an allegation is made, staff must be able to prove that any such reward has not been corruptly obtained.

Recruitment and Employment Decisions

Staff involved in appointments should ensure that their decisions are based on merit. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, staff should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to the applicant or have a close personal relationship. Similarly, staff should not be involved with decisions relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any relative or those in a close personal relationship. Members of staff who are relatives, or have a close personal relationship, should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other, queries should be directed to the Headteacher or the CEO. If it is unavoidable, you must not use the relationship to influence or advance the interests of that member of staff.

Only the Headteacher, CEO or person with delegated responsibility may issue a reference for any member of staff, past or present, if the reference is to be an official work reference given on headed paper on behalf of the School/ Trust.

This does not preclude a member of staff giving a reference for any other member of staff, past or present, providing the reference makes it clear that the views are those of the author in a private capacity and are not related to their work at the School/Trust. The use of official stationery, logos, and in particular headed notepaper, for this purpose is forbidden.

Attendance at Work

The school expects that staff will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
- Refer to the school's Special Leave Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the school's Sickness Absence Policy when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

Compliance with the Code of Conduct

The **Disciplinary Procedure** may be enacted if there is any breach of the code of practice which could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It is therefore very important that staff read, understand and adhere to this code. The Disciplinary Procedure exists to deal with those situations where procedures and policies have not been followed or expectations of a standard of behaviour have not been met. It is designed, wherever possible, to encourage improved conduct informally, however where cases are more serious the formal process will be followed.

Where staff are accused of abuse, neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of pupils, the Trust's 'Allegations of Abuse against Staff in the Trust' document should be followed.

Volunteers, contractors, casual and agency staff who breach the code may be requested to cease working at the Trust.

This code cannot cover every problem which may occur. If in doubt, the Headteacher or CEO should be consulted before taking action.

Whistleblowing is the mechanism for staff to voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Staff have a duty and responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the senior leaders and/or external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils may be at risk. The Whistleblowing Policy is available to staff who believe that inappropriate behaviour has occurred.

The **Capability Procedure** supports the Trust to deal with issues of capability and performance in a fair and consistent way and at the earliest possible stage, whilst the employee continues to carry out their role. This is achieved by making the employee aware of any performance which falls below the required standards and encouraging, supporting, providing training and giving them an opportunity to improve.

In respect of the **Equalities Act 2010**; The Trust expects all staff to show consideration and respect to their colleagues, pupils, parents, carers, governors and members of the public and the local community and treat everyone with dignity and respect and not discriminate unlawfully against any person. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief,
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Trust will also not discriminate on the grounds of trade union membership or non-membership, part time or fixed term contract status, caring responsibilities and past unrelated convictions.

The workplace should be a fair, inclusive and safe environment where diversity is valued. The Equality Policy contains further information.

Harassment and Bullying. All staff have a duty to help create an environment at work where unlawful discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying in any form is considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Harassment and Bullying Policy provides further information.

Code of Conduct Monitoring and Review

Consultation

This Policy has been consulted on with the recognised professional associations/trade unions set out below:

- National Education Union
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- National Association of Headteachers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Unison
- GMB

Monitoring

The Trust HR in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer will monitor the outcomes and impact of this Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

Review

Member of Staff Responsible	HR Director
Relevant Guidance/Advice/Legal Reference	DfE Keeping Pupils Safe in Education (KCSiE) Shropshire Council HR Department
Policy Adopted By	Trust Board
Consultation	Professional Associations / Trade Unions
Date of Policy	Autumn Term 2023
Review Period	Annually
Date of Next Review	Autumn Term 2024