

# **Templemoor Infant and Nursery School**

## **Code of Conduct (For all School Based Employees)**

**A model policy for Trafford schools**



Policy Adopted	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2018
Committee	Full Governing Body
Last Reviewed	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Next Review Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2019

### **What is it?**

1. We are required to set out a staff code of conduct under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This code of conduct:

- sets out minimum standards of behaviour for employees;
- provides guidelines to help maintain and improve standards;
- aims to protect the reputation of both employees and the school;
- aims to protect the rights and interests of children and young people involved with the school;
- aims to ensure that our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

2. This code of conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

3. This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with a number of policies and schemes relating to conduct which are set out at the end of this document.

### **Who does it apply to?**

4. This policy applies to all employees of Templemoor Infant and Nursery School, including supply workers.

5. School employees need to:

- read this policy;
- ensure they understand it;
- ask if there are any points that are unclear;
- use this code of conduct, alongside other school policies, to guide them in their role.

6. Breach of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal. Please refer to the disciplinary procedure for more information.

### **General obligations**

7. Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school.
- Treat pupils and others 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.
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

### **Responsibilities**

8. Teaching staff must adhere to:

- the terms and conditions outlined in the school teachers pay and conditions document (STPCD). A copy of STPCD can be found for reference purposes in the school's administration office.
- the Teacher Standards as set out by the Department for Education. These cover both teaching standards and personal and professional conduct. Teacher's performance will be regularly reviewed against these professional standards.

9. We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

### **What are the main points?**

10. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of behaviour from school employees.

11. Employees represent the school and are trusted to act in a way which promotes the school's interests and protects its reputation.

12. Employees are accountable for their actions and should ask the headteacher for advice if they are not sure of the appropriate action to take.

### **Staff / pupil relationships**

13. It is an offence under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

14. 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.

15. 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.

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

17. If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

### **Safeguarding**

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

19. 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.

20. Our Safeguarding Policy and procedures are available on the school website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

### **Communication and social media**

21. School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. Staff should consider setting public profiles to private.

22. 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.

23. Staff should be aware of the school's E-safety Policy, Social Media Policy and Twitter Policy, which are available on the school website.

### **Acceptable use of technology**

24. 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.

25. Staff will not use personal mobile phones in front of pupils (except on a school trip/ or in an emergency with the prior permission of the Headteacher). They will not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

26. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

27. Conflicts of interest may occur if a decision of the school could affect an employee, or their close friends or relatives, either positively or negatively.

28. Interests could include:

- involvement with businesses which have existing or proposed contracts with the school;

29. Employees should ask themselves the question "Would a member of the public think that they or their family would benefit from the connection between their personal interest and their employment with the school?"

30. If the answer is yes then they must declare their interest to the head teacher in writing.

31. Employees may hold their own personal and political views but must act professionally at work and not allow these views to interfere with their work.

### **Outside Commitments**

32. Employees should ensure that their activities outside work do not conflict with their duty to the school.

33. All teaching and support staff should inform the headteacher before engaging in any other business or accepting additional employment.

34. Any additional employment should not conflict with the school's interests, the role the employee fulfils for the school, or have the potential to bring the school into disrepute.

35. Employees may not set up a business, or accept a job with a business, which is in direct competition with the school. Employees should check with the head teacher where further clarification is required.

36. If an employee works for another organisation they may not act as a messenger between that organisation and the school. Formal channels of communication must be maintained.

37. Any secondary employment must not be carried out during an employee's contracted school working hours, nor whilst on standby for official call out purposes, unless such employment can be undertaken from their home.

38. It is an employee's responsibility to monitor the number of hours they work and to ensure that they are rested and refreshed and able to carry out their role. On average employees should not work more than 48 hours in total each week unless they have opted out of the Working Time Regulations.

### **Confidentiality**

39. Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccurate, or improper disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions. This includes information relating to school business and pupil data.

40. Employees must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff without the express consent of that individual or authorisation from the headteacher.

41. Confidential information, belonging to the school, should not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.

42. Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment to cause damage to the school, or for personal gain, or benefit. Nor should they pass information on to others who may use it in such a way.

43. Employees should also be aware that under Section 13 of the Education Act 2011, it is a criminal offence to disclose the identity of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation of a criminal offence made by or on behalf of a pupil, until a teacher is charged with that offence. This includes disclosing any information that could make that person identifiable. Further clarification is available from the head teacher if required.

### **Time, facilities and publications**

44. Employees must spend all of their contracted hours working for the school.

45. Employees may not make personal use of the school's property or facilities (stationery, photocopiers, car parks etc.) unless authorised to do so by the head teacher. Computers and software may only be used in line with the school computer (IT) security policy and e-mail/internet use code of practice.

46. Employees may only use the school's telephones to make or receive private calls in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the headteacher. In addition they should not use their personal mobile phone to make or receive personal calls during pupil contact time in the classroom, other than in an emergency, (with the prior permission of the headteacher).

47. Any public funds entrusted to an employee must be used in a responsible and lawful manner.

48. Employees who want to publish any material which they have written in connection with their duties or in which they describe themselves as holding a position within the school must first gain the consent of the head teacher.

49. If, in the course of their work, an employee creates a copyright work (for example, procedures a manual, or a software programme); patentable invention; or design capable of registration; this would become the property of the school and, if appropriate, they would be required to cooperate in the registration formalities.

50. Employees may retain fees for any external work delivered on behalf of the school for which a personal fee is payable, for example, delivering a lecture, with the prior agreement of the headteacher.

### **Equality**

51. The school is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity and has a positive duty to promote these within the community it serves.

52. Employees must treat colleagues, pupils, parents, carers, governors and members of the public and the local community with respect and must not discriminate against any person.

53. Employees involved in making recruitment decisions should ensure that their decisions are based only on the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. If any applicant is a close personal friend, or relative, this should be declared and they should not be involved in the recruitment process.

54. Employees should not be involved in any decisions relating to discipline, pay or promotion of close personal friends or relatives.

### **Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship**

55. Employees must not accept any fee or reward for work done other than their pay and allowances as set out in their contract of employment except as set out in paragraphs (18) and (35) above.

56. It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts for employees to accept gifts, loans, fees or rewards as an inducement to act in a certain way in their official capacity. Notwithstanding this employees may accept small items of gratitude in the course of their employment from time to time, for example, inexpensive pens, diaries, flowers, chocolates. However if they are in any doubt about the circumstances, or motivation, for expressing such gratitude, they should declare the expression of gratitude to the head teacher. In addition, employees may only accept an offer of a more significant gift (as a guide worth more than £25) or hospitality (e.g. visits, meals, sporting events etc.) if there is a genuine need to do so in order to represent the school in the community.

57. Gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to employees or members of their family as a consequence of their employment must be declared to the head teacher in writing whether accepted or not.

58. Employees should never accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers.

59. If an external organisation wishes, or is sought, to sponsor a school activity the rules concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors. The head teacher must be involved in any decision.

60. Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service, no employee or member of their family must benefit from it unless a full disclosure of interest has been made to the headteacher. All sponsorship must be recorded.

### **Dress and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

61. Employees should ensure that their dress is appropriate to the professional nature of their role at the school, the activities they are involved in and any health and safety requirements related to these.

62. Suitable personal protective equipment will be issued and must be worn where a risk assessment indicates it is appropriate.

### **Speaking to the media**

63. It is advisable for any approaches regarding school related issues, from all press, radio, or TV stations, or specialist press, to be directed to the head teacher.

### **Misconduct**

64. All employees should conduct themselves in a professional manner at work. Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during, or outside of working hours, which bring them or the school into disrepute, may be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

65. It is essential that employees inform the head teacher of any police investigation, charge, caution, reprimand, fine or conviction immediately. All such disclosures will be handled in confidence but this may result in a suspension from duties while an investigation takes place.

66. It is essential that employees inform the head teacher of any police investigation, charge, caution, reprimand, fine or conviction, made against a family member, or person

living in their household immediately and in particular if the matter is of a safeguarding nature. All such disclosures will be handled in confidence but this may result in a suspension from duty whilst an investigation and possible exemption from the DfE takes place.

### **Are there any exemptions from the Code of Conduct?**

67. No – however some parts of the code of conduct will have more of an effect on senior, managerial and professional staff than others.

68. Certain employees are responsible under their own professional codes of conduct. In cases where professional codes of conduct appear to conflict with the school's code advice should be obtained from the head teacher.

### **Head teacher responsibilities:**

69. Provide additional advice and guidance to staff on any matter within the code of conduct, having taken advice, where appropriate.

70. Signpost employees to relevant policies, documents and guidelines.

### **Further advice and information**

71. The school may also operate a number of policies and schemes relating to conduct at work which employees are required to follow, these include:

- Disciplinary procedure;
- Teacher Standards;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- E Safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Twitter Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Whistleblowing;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018)

72. For further information, or clarification, employees should speak to the headteacher.



## **Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)**

### **• What should an employee do if they know that someone is breaching this code of conduct?**

Often it is those who are most familiar with the organisation, its employees, who realise that there is something wrong with in it. However, they may be reluctant to act upon their concerns because they think that they will be perceived as being disloyal, that their concerns may be unfounded, or because they are afraid that they might be victimised if they speak up.

The school has in place a Whistleblowing policy to enable employees to raise concerns in an appropriate manner and to ensure that they do not suffer a detriment as a result of doing so because they have raised a genuine concern about it.

### **• Can an employee's partner's business tender for a contract?**

The code of conduct does not preclude anyone from having the opportunity to tender for business. However the process must be, and be seen to be, fair open and transparent. To this end employees would need to make the head teacher aware of their interest, take no part in the tendering process and ensure that they do not pass on any information which would give that business any advantage in the process.

### **• Can an employee's relative apply for a job in the school?**

Yes, they can apply and would be considered on the basis of their suitability for the role. The applicant should declare their relationship to the employee on the appropriate section of the job application form.

If the employee is involved in recruiting for the role they should not be involved in any stage of the appointment and should disclose the relationship as soon as they are aware that their relative, or close personal friend, is applying for the role so that someone else can be assigned to the appointments process.

### **• Can an employee take an evening job?**

All teachers and support staff should inform their head teacher prior to taking on any additional work. In all circumstances employees must remember:

- They should not do work which is in direct competition with the school;
- The work they are doing should not bring the school into disrepute;
- They may not act as a "go- between" between the school and the other business;
- They must not undertake other work when they are on duty for the school, including during standby or call out duties unless the work can be undertaken from home;
- That they are responsible for ensuring they get enough rest and do not exceed working time regulations.

- **What if a pupil buys an employee a box of chocolates – should they accept them?**

Generally, gifts which are of low value (under £25) can be accepted. Employees should be guided by school procedures and by common sense.

- **Can employees accept discounts because they work for the school?**

Any discount offered to an individual which is not available to other staff in the school should be treated in the same way as gifts and hospitality and generally should not be accepted.

- **Can employees campaign for a political party outside of work?**

Employees may campaign on behalf of a political party however when engaged on school business they must remain politically neutral and not allow their personal or political views to interfere with their duties.

- **What types of interests should be declared?**

An interest is anything which could cause a reasonable member of the public, knowing all facts, to think that an employee might be influenced when making a decision in the course of their work.

Interests could include:

- Land or property ownership
- Relationships with people involved
- Acting as a school governor for another school
- Involvement with an organisation or pressure group which may oppose a school policy, it should be noted however that individuals are free as trade union members to take part in activities organised and authorised by their Trade Unions without declaring an interest.

- **Can an employee make a comment to the press if they are approached for example, as a union member on a picket line?**

In these circumstances the employee should direct the press to the correct contact person for that union. If an employee does make a comment to the press, whilst in their role as a member of a union, they will need to consider any potential conflict of interest or impact on their work role with the school and the school's reputation.

- **Can an employee use the school photocopier to make personal copies?**

Employees should get authorisation from the head teacher before using any work facilities for personal use.

- **What should an employee do if the code of conduct doesn't cover their specific situation?**

In the first instance seek advice from the headteacher.