



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

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INTRODUCTION

At St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, we believe in a whole Trust culture that is safe and inclusive. We do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, religion/belief, pregnancy and maternity, sex or sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

The safety and well-being of our children is of the utmost importance, and we believe "**children come first**" and expect our staff to "**go the extra mile**" in the pursuit of excellence. In order for us to provide a consistent and vigilant culture of safeguarding, all staff (as detailed in the scope) must actively follow procedures, understand policies and take responsibility to promote a safe and secure and inclusive environment in which they always act in the best interests of children's safety, health and wellbeing.

*Note: when the word workplace is used it is anything that connects the employee in any way to the work place

PURPOSE

The Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour, which all staff must observe. Staff are in a privileged and unique position of influence, and therefore, must model the highest possible standards of conduct. All staff have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Trust whether inside or outside working hours. Breach or failure to observe the requirements of this policy document may lead to action being taken under the Trust's disciplinary procedures.

This policy guides us with principles that will safeguard pupils and protect staff, it makes explicit the expectations of staff behaviour and potential resulting actions, if policies/procedures were to be breached. This policy gives clarity regarding expectations of staff where they might be otherwise unaware.

SCOPE

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- All Trust employees (teaching and support staff)
- Volunteers, including Directors
- Casual workers
- Apprentices
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
- Student placements, including those undertaking Initial Teaching Training
- Contractors/Consultants

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Trust staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct, and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The Trust expects staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider Trust community with dignity and respect valuing everyone and embracing diversity at all times. As well as the Trust's expectations of standards of work and behaviours you may also be bound by a set of standards issued by your own profession. For example, all staff employed under School Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct. Adherence to this policy is a contractual obligation. Staff failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action.

KEY PRINCIPLES EXPECTED OF STAFF

- Act professionally at all times to promote the welfare, health and safety and well-being of pupils/students
- Take responsibility for your actions and behaviour (whether in person or virtual through social media) and avoid any conduct which could lead a reasonable person to question your motives or intentions
- Do not engage in any activity (inside or outside of work) that could damage the reputation of the Trust or your own reputation (which could call into question your suitability as an employee of the Trust)
- To understand and adhere to Trust policies and procedures plus work in accordance with DfE **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)** and **Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People (2022)** and any statutory guidance/policy in connection with education providers
- At all times set good examples to our pupils, parents and colleagues. You are a role model - inside and outside of work
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that you see or hear in the work environment, so that colleagues, parents, pupils and outside agencies can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to fellow professionals
- Report any concerns you have relating to unsafe practice or inappropriate conduct towards or around pupils (inside or outside of the work environment), by anyone undertaking duties on behalf of the Trust
- You have an obligation to share with the Head of School/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Senior Leader/Line Manager/HR any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil

SAFEGUARDING

All Trust staff have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people they come into contact with. All staff are provided with a copy of the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy upon commencement of undertaking any work for the Trust. For full reference of the details, please refer again to the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, which can be found in your staff online shared area/with your DSL and on the St Cuthbert's Trust website.

It is a requirement that all staff will undertake the minimum of the Level 1 Safeguarding Training (with specific requirements for higher training in certain roles).

We follow the statutory and non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges including Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners, March 2015 and Teacher Standards 2012 (updated 2013)

ALLEGATIONS THAT MAY MEET THE HARM THRESHOLD

This section is based on section 1; part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teacher, volunteer or contractor has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children - this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is subject to the allegation. Substantiated allegations against staff relating to safeguarding will result in disciplinary action and may result in dismissal.

LOW LEVEL CONCERNS ABOUT MEMBERS OF STAFF

A low-level concern is defined as any concern about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold as set by KCSiE (see below) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral

to the Disclosure and Barring Service and for Teachers, the Teaching Regulations Agency (TRA) at the time of its reporting.

Low level concerns can mean inappropriate behaviour and can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour/s to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Low level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside or outside of work.

Non-exhaustive examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern, that when recognised, must be reported to the Head of School, include:

- Being overly friendly with children - this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g. conversations that are about a staff member's personal life or are of a sexual nature
- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Low-level concerns 'can' be grooming behaviours and might be differentiated from concerns/behaviours that are categorised within the 'harms' threshold. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and is believed it would represent a threat of harm to a child/has harmed a child (see paragraph above).

Though low-level concerns by their nature, can appear (and may well be) less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the Trust understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in the child protection/safeguarding policy. We encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted.

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

Please refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for any questions or doubts about any points of safeguarding and child protection practice.

STAFF-PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-on-one basis staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

WHISTLEBLOWING

Where staff have any concerns that fall within the terms of whistleblowing, they should read the whistleblowing procedure, then should immediately report their concerns to the Head of School. Where the concern is about the Head of School it should be reported directly to the Chief Operations Officer or the Chief Executive Officer. If the allegation is about either of them speak to the Chair of the Board of Directors. All concerns which meet the criteria for whistleblowing will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially, and appropriate action taken. For full details, the Whistleblowing Policy can be found in staff online shared areas /with your DSL and on the St Cuthbert's Trust website.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All staff have a personal responsibility to promote equality and diversity within the Trust, in respect of all other staff, pupils/students, parents/carers, Directors, any user of the Trust sites and the local community.

Staff will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, religion/belief, pregnancy and maternity, sex or sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership.

Staff will recognise and value diversity of others and as a representative of the Trust, show through their behaviours how we appreciate that difference can benefit our Trust and local community.

DATA PROTECTION

All staff are responsible for:

- Collecting, storing and processing any personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Policy
- Informing the Trust of any changes to their personal data, such as a change of address
- Contacting the Data Protection Officer in the following circumstances:

- With any questions about the operation of this policy, data protection law, retaining personal data or keeping personal data secure
- If they have any concerns that this policy is not being followed
- If they are unsure whether or not they have a lawful basis to use personal data in a particular way
- If they need to rely on or capture consent, draft a privacy notice, deal with data protection rights invoked by an individual, or transfer personal data outside the European Economic Area
- If there has been a data breach
- Whenever they are engaging in a new activity that may affect the privacy rights of individuals
- If they need help with any contracts or sharing personal data with third parties

For full reference, please read the Trust Data Protection Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff are expected to behave professionally and exercise confidentiality. Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information to anyone else, except to their colleagues, whose professional role it is to work with that/those pupil/s/student/s.

Any issues of concern, staff can have full confidence to report their concerns with full protection of their confidentiality (except for where necessary on a need-to-know basis and/or in the interest of safeguarding children).

Where a member of staff is in any doubt whether to share information or keep it to themselves, they must seek guidance from their Head of School or HR.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

ICT is an integral part of the way our Academy Trust works, and is a critical resource for pupils, staff, Directors, volunteers and visitors. It supports teaching and learning, pastoral and operational functions of the Trust. However, the ICT resources and facilities our Trust uses also pose risks to data protection, online safety and safeguarding.

Should any member of staff become aware of any unsafe/inappropriate/illegal ICT or social media activity involving a pupil/student, they have a contractual obligation under safeguarding policies to share this information with their line manager, DSL or the Head of School.

Any breaches of the Trust ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy will be treated seriously & may result in disciplinary action. The Trust's policy on this matter is comprehensive, please refer to this for full details.

School staff social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media, it should be in such a way that pupils cannot find them. Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or parents via social media.

PERSONAL MOBILE PHONES AND HANDHELD DEVICES

Staff are permitted to use their mobile phones on site as directed in the Trust ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. However, mobile phones and handheld devices should not normally be used as follows:

- In lessons when teaching is taking place
- When directly supervising students inside or outside the school/college and the member of staff is responsible for their health and safety
- In front of students for personal use

Staff must not:

- use their personal mobile phone or devices to contact pupils or their parent/carers (unless agreed as part of an event or outing outside of the Trust buildings, and where a Trust phone is not provided for this purpose)
- If there is a case where the school/college telephone system fails and staff using personal mobile phone is the only option for calling a parent/carer, staff must block their number before making the call
- unless with prior approval from the Head of School or delegated authority and within safeguarding processes, use their personal mobile phone or device to take images/video/audio of pupils or retain personal information regarding the pupils at the school/college. Any image/audio or video files taken of pupils/students by staff, should be saved to the Trusts secure server and deleted from their personal handheld device
- give out their personal phone numbers or contact details, including personal email addresses to pupils or their parent/carer
- keep inappropriate or illegal content on any device including their personal device

Where there is a need to deviate from any of the above, e.g. in an emergency situation, employees must inform the Head of School immediately or as soon as practically possible.

The above points aim not only to protect pupils/students but also to protect staff from allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour.

Staff bringing a personal mobile phone or handheld device into school/college do so at their own risk. The Trust will not be held responsible or accept any liability for personal equipment that is lost or is stolen.

There may be deviation from the above in a local context within your place of work. This will be made clear by each school/college.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

It is recognised that there may be occasions where personal relationships exist amongst individual adults at work. Where such staff are, or may be, working closely with colleagues with whom they have a personal relationship, they must ensure the following:

- that any such relationships do not adversely affect their employment or ability to carry out their role
- adopt a process to protect against bias/unfair advantage or prejudice, particularly where they have supervisory or managerial responsibility over the other
- avoid situations where there is potential for conflict of interest
- ensure that situations do not develop where other employees feel unable to speak openly and honestly, or feel that a relationship is having an adverse impact on their own employment

A personal relationship is defined as: a family relationship e.g. parents, grandparents, in-laws & step-parents, siblings and children & grandchildren (including in-laws and step children), spouses or partners, business/commercial/financial relationship, or any other close personal friendship or relationship NB. This list is not exhaustive.

Where families or pupils are known to staff members in a personal capacity, it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that a declaration is made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Head of School, so that their deployment of work can be made appropriately without any conflict of interest.

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

All staff should keep in mind the professional expectations of them when working with others. Politeness and respect are essential ingredients: where differences occur they should be dealt with calmly and fairly, we must always remember we are at work and would not deal with matters as we might do in our personal lives. We have line management structures and policies and procedures are there to support us with any differences that cannot be resolved in a calm and reasonable way, without personal judgement, showing mutual respect for our colleagues.

BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE OF WORKING HOURS

All staff should be aware that their professional conduct and reputation extends beyond the realm of their 'within work time'.

Staff must not engage in conduct outside of work which could damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. Any such conduct could lead to disciplinary action. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology/social media and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

NOTIFICATION OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS/CAUTIONS OR ACTIVITIES

All staff must disclose issues relating to breaches of the law, including police cautions or criminal convictions before or during employment. Staff obligation extends to issues that are related to criminal activity but may not lead to a caution or a conviction. Any such activities must be reported to the Head of School or HR. The Trust has a responsibility for the safety of everyone within the Trust, therefore the relevance of any activities will be considered in line with the role you are entrusted to undertake within your employment with the Trust.

MULTI-EMPLOYMENT

Staff may undertake work outside school/college, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust or be at such a level of commitment where the number of hours worked may contravene the working time regulations, affects your work performance or call into question your suitability to work with children.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school/college that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the Trust or be rewarded through association with the Trust.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Trust's obligations can only be met by ensuring that all employees fully discharge their responsibilities. Every member of staff must:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work
- Co-operate with management with regard to agreed health and safety arrangements and procedures

- Know and keep to the rules and procedures relating to their work, and report to their immediate senior leaders all difficulties or hazards liable to endanger themselves or other persons
- Not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided by the employer in the interest of health, safety and welfare
- Report details to their immediate senior leaders, as soon as possible, if involved in an accident resulting in, or which may have resulted in, injury and in all cases before the end of their working day on which the incident occurs
- Arrange for any spillage of dangerous substances or flammable liquid to be dealt with immediately, having due regard to the nature of such spillage
- Use machinery and equipment only when authorised and properly trained to do so
- Wear or use correctly all protective clothing and equipment issued to them and get replacements for lost, damaged or defective items
- Be aware of and read any health/safety/security signage around the building/s and act in accordance with instructions given on the signage

DRESS CODE

Staff are individually responsible for their general presentation, clothing (except for when a uniform is provided), appearance and personal hygiene and should consider how this may be perceived by others. For full details please reference Staff Dress Code Guidance on staff online shared areas.

ABSENCE FORM WORK

All staff are contractually obliged to follow the sickness absence policy/procedure and procedures for leave of absence. Not following these procedures could amount to unauthorised absence, which is a conduct breach and/or could affect your pay.

GENERAL

All staff are expected to follow the Trust's policies and procedures: including student/pupil behaviour and anti-bullying in all interactions in school/college.

Where student/pupil firmness/reprimand is called for this should be exercised calmly, and staff should avoid shouting at pupils/students unless there is an immediate Health and Safety risk. The Trust Behaviour Policy and associated documents establish expectations and approved sanctions. There is always support available when difficulties arise in managing behaviour.

All staff should be aware of what physical contact with pupils/students is appropriate. Staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury. Staff are allowed to comfort a child who is hurt/distressed in a manner appropriate to the age of the child. Adults should not initiate any

physical contact unnecessarily, and they should follow the clear boundaries that are set.

Use of reasonable force as extracted from KCSiE - there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils/students or blocking a pupil's/student's path.

All staff have a responsibility to promote fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The expression of extremist views by staff will not be tolerated and should be reported to the Head of School or HR, who will contact relevant authorities if necessary.

It is not acceptable to give gifts to pupils/students, unless it is part of the agreed rewards system.

All staff should treat Trust resources responsibly, and exercise due financial care. All staff have a responsibility to look after the resources of the school/college. This includes not wasting resources unnecessarily (including physical resources and those such as heat/electricity) and following the principles of 'reduce, re-use, recycle' where appropriate.

Staff must not use Trust services/resources or equipment for activities associated with their own business or other jobs.

The references made to categories of behaviour/conduct/actions is not an exhaustive list; and all staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct throughout the entirety of their employment with the Trust during working hours and outside of working hours. The references made are also not the complete detail of any subject matter, for full details please refer to specific policies/procedures held in the staff online shared areas.

It is our expectation that all staff should sign a copy of this code of conduct.

Staff signature: Date:.....

Print name:.....

Return to: HR@smchull.org