Staff Code of Conduct

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Approved by: Executive Leadership Team

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our Trust and all our schools create an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

Trust and School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

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

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and

whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreements and articles of association.

3. General obligations

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

✓ Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

✓ Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within

✓ Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

4. Safeguarding

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

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and 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.

Our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are available here: [Trust Policies | Elston Hall MAT](#)

New staff will be given copies on as part of their induction.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a 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 a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

In line with the Trust's Managing Allegations Policy, 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 the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children

- Having favourites

- Taking photographs of children on a personal device

- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen

- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policies. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

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

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policies.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger

- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement

- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistleblowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our Trust's detailed whistleblowing process, please refer to our whistleblowing policy which can be found here: Trust Policies | Elston Hall MAT

5. Staff-pupil relationships

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.

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 into the room

- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

- Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

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

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policies.

6. Communication and social media

Trust and School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

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. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they never post any images of pupils through their personal online profiles. Staff must never allow the school, Trust, colleagues or children to be identified on their personal social network sites.

Staff should be aware of the Trust's online safety policy.

7. Acceptable use of technology & AI

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

The Trust has the right to, and regularly does, monitor emails and internet use on our IT system.

Ethical use of AI - Staff members must adhere to ethical standards when using AI in educational settings, including principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, and respect for privacy rights.

Pupil safety and well-being - The safety and well-being of our pupils are paramount when employing AI tools and platforms in teaching practices, ensuring content is suitable and safe for primary school pupils.

Data privacy and security - Staff are responsible for safeguarding pupil data privacy and maintaining the security of any personal information collected or processed by AI systems, complying with relevant data protection laws.

Equity and inclusion - Staff must promote equitable access to AI resources for all pupils and address any disparities or biases that may arise, ensuring AI technologies are inclusive and accessible to diverse pupil populations.

Professional development and training - Continuous professional development is essential for staff to enhance their understanding of AI technologies and their applications in education, fostering a culture of ongoing learning and improvement.

Compliance and accountability - Staff must comply with school policies and procedures regarding the use of AI tools and platforms, with mechanisms in place for monitoring and accountability to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

Communication and transparency - Staff should communicate openly and transparently with pupils, parents, and stakeholders about the purpose, benefits, and potential risks of AI technologies, addressing any concerns or questions raised by the school community.

Evaluation and reflection - Regular evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of AI interventions on pupil learning outcomes is essential, promoting reflection and evidence-based decision-making to enhance educational practices.

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties

- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others

- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policies.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using Trust / school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared and recorded on the Trust's gifts and hospitality register as per the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the Trust / School is correct. This should include:

Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)

- Qualifications

- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the Trust / school, the member of staff will advise the Trust / school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing. ~~and we ask that tattoos are covered up.~~

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Trust or school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the board of Trustees.

Our Trust Board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistleblowing