



**STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

All schools in Connect Schools Academy Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Staff Responsible:	Head Teacher
Date of Review:	June 2020
Date of Next Review:	June 2022

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Change
June 2020	New Trust Policy drawing together elements from Connect Schools' Policies
	<p>Page 6 – enhanced section in relation to professional relationships with staff</p> <p>Page 7 – inclusion of text in relation to relationships with third parties</p> <p>Page 7 – inclusion of text in relation to relationships with contractors</p> <p>Page 7 – to signpost staff to the Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy</p> <p>Page 8 – mention of the Trust Staff Confidentiality Policy</p> <p>Page 9 to change approve to Connect Finance and Resources Committee</p> <p>Page 10 to include reference to the Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy</p> <p>Page 10 to mention Trust Staff Confidentiality Policy</p>

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## **1. Aims, scope and principles**

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff employed by Connect Schools Academy Trust (CSAT) to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our schools are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated equally with respect.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the Trust and its schools, including the CEO and Executive Headteacher;
- all staff in units, provisions or bases that are attached to the schools.
- all student teachers, trainee teaching assistants and apprentices on placement.

The Code of Conduct does not apply to:

- peripatetic staff who are centrally employed by outside agencies;
- school meals staff employed by external catering companies;
- employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners).

(Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body)

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, 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 acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

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

## **3. General obligations**

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance, dress 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 or other relevant professional 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, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures and the Duty to Prevent legislation, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Staff have a duty to inform and report to the Headteacher (or in the case of the Headteacher, to their line manager) any circumstances in their personal lives that may impact on their work or present a reputational risk to the School/Trust. For example, personal involvement with Social Services in relation to their own children.

A staff member is expected to use their own professional judgement to determine if their personal circumstances warrant disclosing. For the avoidance of any doubt, if the member of staff is unsure if their circumstances warrant disclosing, they should make the disclosure to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Failure to disclose such information may be deemed a disciplinary offence and would be handled in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedure.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the staff room and from the school office. The Trust safeguarding overarching statement appears on the Trust website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### **5. Professional Relationships**

##### **With Children:**

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.

Staff will use physical contact with children in a careful, sensitive and respectful way. However, any physical contact should be avoided when staff members are alone with individual children, except in emergency. We adopt the principle that parents want their children to be given a certain level of physical reassurance if distressed, hurt or otherwise in need. This is the case for all children, but may be appropriate more frequently for younger children.

**Staff have a professional responsibility to inform an appropriate person if we believe that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or well-being of any child or group of children in line with the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.**

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
- 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.

#### **With Parents:**

Staff should seek to work in partnership with parents, using their understanding of their own child to help us to provide the best learning opportunities that we can. We recognise that parents' worries and concerns can be extremely emotive and we acknowledge that, at times, we will need to speak to parents when they are upset.

Staff should protect themselves by ensuring that they meet with parents in areas of the school that are visible and easily accessible to other staff members, whilst remembering to be sensitive to the confidential nature of some discussions. Staff must always make sure that colleagues know when and where they are meeting with parents.

Staff should not give out personal contact details to parents including 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 pupils are not generally acceptable unless agreed with the Head Teacher (for example, Easter eggs given to children attending the Easter holiday school).

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 their line manager or the Head Teacher.

#### **With other members of Staff:**

Staff must act in a professional manner towards colleagues, irrespective of their relative position or status within the school or Trust hierarchy. Staff should address concerns openly and honestly with the person to whom the concern is addressed whenever possible, without

publicly criticising anyone. All staff should be publicly supportive of colleagues, and deal with concerns or disagreements privately, with support if necessary.

All employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment that was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. The school's recruitment and selection procedure must be strictly observed. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

Staff should make the Headteacher/Local Governing Body aware of any personal relations with other staff members or Governors that might lead to a conflict of interests or cast doubt on the integrity of the school; especially where one or other of the parties holds a management or leadership role.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, capability, promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.

#### **With local community and service users:**

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the Trust and Local Governing Body.

#### **Relationships with contractors**

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, must be made known to the Headteacher and/or Local Governing Body.

All employees who engage or supervise contractors or who have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, must also declare that relationship.

A Declaration of Interest pro-forma is available for such notification.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenderers and no special favour should be shown to businesses or consultancies run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives, in the tendering process.

If an employee is in doubt as to whether a relationship should be declared in relation to tendering or procurement, they should seek advice from the Trust Finance Controller.

## **6. Communication and social media**

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 do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy, Trust's Social Media Policy, Twitter policy and Facebook policy.

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

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.

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 monitor emails and internet use on the schools' IT systems.

## **8. Confidentiality**

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

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- 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 is at risk of harm.

There is a Trust Staff Confidentiality Policy. All staff will be expected to sign this policy at appointment and periodically thereafter.



## **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 school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes.

Staff are referred to the Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy in relation to the Trust's approach to gifts from parents and pupils.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner, exhibiting the importance of the job that we do. This includes:

- wearing smart, practical clothes
- avoiding wearing clothes that could cause offence or embarrassment to others
- jeans are not considered acceptable, unless participating in a trip, activity or visit that requires harder wearing clothes (e.g. residential trips, Forest School or some art activities)
- when leading physical activities and/or PE lessons (including Sports Day), changing into suitable clothing for that lesson (e.g. training shoes and tracksuit)
- not wearing excessive amounts of jewellery and understanding our own Health and Safety responsibilities
- Footwear must also be appropriate; shoes must be properly secured; no flip-flops

## **11. Other Areas**

- Members of teaching staff arrive in school at least fifteen minutes before the start of the school day
- Other staff members arrive in school in good time to begin their contracted hours
- If for any reason we are delayed in the morning, it is our responsibility to ensure that the appropriate person in school is informed at the earliest opportunity
- Teachers are available after the end of the school day to meet with colleagues, parents and managers
- We support and use the systems in place for monitoring who is on site and understand that these systems are for the Health and Safety of ourselves and others

## **12. Conduct outside of work**

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

### **13. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the Trustee Finance and Resources Committee.

### **14. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding
- GDPR Policy
- E-safety
- Whistleblowing
- Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Trust Staff Confidentiality Policy