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## Code of Conduct Policy

### Aims

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework of standards and behaviour guidelines for safe professional practice and effective partnerships between CST, school leaders, employees and parents/carers. It covers some of the most important issues relating to personal conduct, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.

The Code sets out the minimum standards that apply to all employees whether teacher or support employees (including volunteers), visitors or locums working with students on and off site. Following this Code will help to safeguard employees, members of the Local Governing Body (LGB) and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to students and the required professional standards.

This document is in addition to and compliments the Teachers' Standards, National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers and other relevant professional standards as well as CST's and school's own policies and procedures, terms and conditions of employment and contracts.

All employees, LGB and volunteers have a legal duty to keep students safe, promote their welfare and wellbeing and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students and behaviour by adults that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgment. (Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Employees, LGB and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so, particularly in terms of child protection. Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the designated member of staff in school. Anyone who has concerns about something that is happening at work which they believe could be unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, a concern for the welfare or safeguarding of a child or be dangerous to the public or the environment, must bring this to the school's/CST's attention. An employee who, in good faith, 'whistleblows' or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation.

Although this Code does not seek to provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for employees, LGB or volunteers, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the required professional standards. There will be occasions and circumstances in which employees, LGB or volunteers have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the student where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgments about their own behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students for whom that individual is responsible.

Any employee who is found to have committed a breach of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The LGB will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this Code.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by CST, including directly employed central team staff, the Education Executive team (this term includes the CEO and Education Directors), Headteachers, teachers, NQTs, school support staff and volunteers.

For the purposes of this policy the term 'Headteachers' includes Headteachers and Principals. In this policy, the term 'teacher' refers to classroom teachers, middle and senior leaders.

## Safeguarding

Employees must be aware of the name of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (and their deputy) and understand their responsibilities under the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. The Headteacher will maintain a list of designated delegates who may appropriately be referred to in the absence of the Headteacher. All employees have a responsibility to raise concerns about the inappropriate or worrying behaviour of a colleague: in good faith and without fear of repercussions. Employees must accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. They must make a record of any incident and promptly consult their line manager.

All employees are obliged to support CST's and the school's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all students. All employees are expected to be familiar with the provisions of both Safeguarding and Allegations Against Staff policies.

If allegations are made about the mistreatment of a student by an employee or volunteer, the Headteacher will follow the procedures adopted by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, in consultation with relevant LA Designated Officers and the guidance set out in the current version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE). If the allegation is made against the Headteacher then, working with the Education Director, the Chair of the LGB will follow the above procedures.

Allegations would include such matters as:

- behaving in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committing a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaving towards a child or children in a way that indicates the person may pose a risk of harm to children.

If an employee feels unable to raise their concerns/issues with their Headteacher or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they must refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

**Employees and volunteers working in schools must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal and/or disciplinary action and/or barring. Any criminal conviction including a caution, conviction, reprimand, final-warning or bind-over should be declared to the Headteacher as soon as possible, whether child-related or not.**

## Expected standards

All employees, LGB and volunteers, as appropriate to their role and/or job description, must:

- Place the wellbeing and learning of students at the centre of their professional practice.
- Have high expectations for all students, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help students progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
- Treat students fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality.

- Model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in students, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people.
- Respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of students, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in students' education.
- Seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and wellbeing in and out of school.
- Reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues.
- Apply the same standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

All employees, LGB and volunteers must be familiar with and act in accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE) and *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings* (Safer Recruitment Consortium, 2015).

Employees should not communicate to the public, press, television or any outside agency the contents of any documents relating to the school/CST or the proceedings of any meeting that discusses confidential information unless required by law or authorised by an appropriate manager to do so. The only exception is in the case of elected Trade Union officials acting in their official capacity. However, Trade Union representatives would be expected to raise any issues through the normal channels through the school and/or CST in the first instance.

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way before it has become public knowledge.

Teachers are additionally required to comply with the Teachers' Standards, in particular Part 2: Personal and Professional Conduct.

### Reporting concerns and recording incidents

All employees, LGB and volunteers must report concerns and incidents in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy and/or the Allegations against Staff Policy. The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours by an adult which would be a cause for concern:

- Allowing a student/young person to be treated badly and/or pretending not to know it is happening.
- Gossiping/sharing information inappropriately.
- Demonstrating inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or using inappropriate language.
- Dressing in a way which is inappropriate for the job role.
- Demonstrating favouritism or not treating students fairly.
- Demonstrating a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries.
- Using his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Appearing to have an inappropriate social relationship with a student or students.
- Appearing to have special or different relationships with a student or students.
- Seeming to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a student.
- Being made aware of a possible act of female genital mutilation (FGM) and failing to report this to the police and to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **Confidentiality**

As data controllers, all schools are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018. In addition, teachers owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their students. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of information about students.

Employees and LGB may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Confidential or personal information about a student or his/her family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

However, there are some circumstances in which an employee may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass on information that might suggest that a child is in need or at risk of significant harm, without delay to those with designated student protection responsibilities.

Confidential information about students must be held securely. Confidential information about students must not be held off the school site other than on security protected school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time set out in the Retaining Records in School Policy.

If an employee is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information s/he must seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to senior management.

## **Propriety and behaviour**

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour or actions, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise his/her position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature contained in, for example, books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises or on any school equipment.

## **Appearance**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. Whilst the school values diversity employees, LGB and volunteers must ensure they are dressed in ways which are neat, clean, modest and appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative so that confidence of service users is maintained. Specifically, clothing should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. Those who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

## **Sexual contact with children and young people and abuse of trust**

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. At all times, adults should maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by

others. They should report any incident with this potential to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Adults within a school environment stand in 'loco parentis' to the children and young persons in their care. Any sexual behaviour or activity, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by an employee, Local Governor or volunteer with or towards such a child or young person is illegal even if the young person is over the age of consent. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child or young person under 18 years, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity

Employees, LGB and volunteers must not have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, electronic mail, phone calls, social networking contact or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students. Employees, LGB and volunteers should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* defines sexual abuse as 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening'.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Employees, LGB and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a student has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

### **Infatuations and crushes**

A child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. An employee or volunteer, who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with him/herself or a colleague, must report this without delay to a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. It is possible that the object of the student's affections may not even be aware of this. The situation will be taken seriously, and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.

Examples of situations which must be reported to the Headteacher are given below:

- Where an employee or volunteer is concerned that he or she might be developing a relationship with a student which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust.
- Where an employee or volunteer is concerned that a student is becoming attracted to him or her or that there is a developing attachment or dependency.
- Where an employee or volunteer is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a student such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others.
- Where an employee or volunteer is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another employee or volunteer or receives information about such a relationship.

## Physical contact and personal privacy

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for employees to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, culture and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different student.

Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an employee or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible in the school's incident book, and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the student's file.

Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and employees should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Any extreme attention-seeking or behaviour by students that makes employees feel uncomfortable should be reported to a line manager.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a student or students, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, employees should seek the student's permission before initiating contact. Employees should listen, observe and take note of the student's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact which is acceptable to the student for the minimum time necessary.

Some employees, for example those who teach PE and games, or who provide music tuition, will on occasion have to initiate physical contact with students in order to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument, to support a student so they can perform a task safely, or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Employees should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, 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 students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with students. Intimate relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to an inappropriate relationship is also unacceptable. Employees must understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring. Employees should make themselves aware of the safeguarding and behaviour management policies adopted by the school and CST.

## Students in distress

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Where an employee has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager. Employees should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not perceived as threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Such incidents occurring in a one-to-one situation must always be recorded and shared with a line manager. Situations that may give rise to concern from the employee or child/young person must be recorded and reported.

## Behaviour management and physical intervention

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Employees and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating students by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation.

The school is committed to the use of positive behaviour management and under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Employees will not use any form of threats, sarcasm or demeaning comments to deal with unacceptable behaviour. Physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Non-statutory guidance is available from the Department for Education website. See [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#) and [Use of reasonable force - advice for Headteachers, Employees and Governing Bodies for all Schools and Academies](#).

Employees may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. This must only be undertaken in accordance with the training and school's policy for physical intervention. All incidents and physical interventions must be recorded and good practice advice states this should be reported to parents/carers. Employees should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

## First aid and intimate care

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Employees must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency where the illness or injury is such that to delay assistance might cause harm to the child. Employees with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. No other employee or volunteer should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency. Children who require any form of intimate care are entitled to privacy, dignity and safety. Students with ongoing health problems will be treated in accordance with any Medical Plan that has been agreed with the parent and the Health Authority and only by those who have been authorised to do so by the Headteacher. Individual circumstances will determine how many adults should be present during intimate care procedures. Where possible, one child will be cared for by one adult. There may however be circumstances when lone members of staff should not be expected to provide any form of intimate care without the safeguard of having another colleague in the same room or area.

## One-to-one situations and meetings with students

One-to-one situations have the potential to make children/young people more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one to one settings with students may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Employees must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every

attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both employees and students are met. Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work for each worker and student. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the school and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Pre-arranged meetings with students away from the school premises or on the school site when the school is not in session are not permitted unless prior written approval is obtained from their parent/guardian and the Headteacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority.

No child or young person should be in, or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been established and agreed with parents/carers and a senior manager/Headteacher beforehand.

## **Home visits**

All work with students and parents should, wherever possible, be undertaken in the school or other recognised workplace. There are workers for whom home visits are an integral part of their work and it is essential that these visits are carried out in accordance with the school's policy.

There may also be occasions, in response to urgent or specific situations, where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child / young person, parents and others living in the household. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be put in place before visits are agreed. Whenever possible, especially where little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone.

In all cases, detailed records including time of arrival, departure and work undertaken must be made.

## **Transporting or accompanying students off-site**

In certain situations, e.g. out of school activities, employees, LGB or volunteers may agree to transport students. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated member of staff. Wherever possible and practicable, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Adults must complete a Driver's Declaration and produce the necessary supporting documentation. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is inappropriate for employees to offer lifts to a student outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed beforehand with parents/carers.

There may, however, be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

## **Educational visits and after-school activities**

Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries. Employees and volunteers should

take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Children, young people, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe employees/child ratios and to the gender mix of employees especially on overnight stays. Please refer to the school's policy on educational visits.

### **Curriculum**

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to students' questions can require careful judgment and employees must take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff. Employees and volunteers must not enter into, or encourage, inappropriate discussion about sexual activity or behaviour.

Please refer to the school's policy on sex and relationships education.

### **Photography, videos and other creative arts**

Please refer to the school's guidance on the use of images and the consent forms therein.

Many school activities involve the taking or recording of images. This may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 2018 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and it is therefore a requirement under the Act that consent is obtained from the parent of a child before any images are made, such as those used for school websites, notice boards, productions or other purposes.

Employees need to be aware of the potential for such images to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. There should be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

Employees should remain sensitive to any student who appears uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken.

Adults should only use equipment provided or authorised by the school to make/take images and should not use mobile telephones or any other similar devices to make/take images.

The following guidance must be followed.

- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the student.
- If the student is named, avoid using the photograph.
- Photographic images must be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs/images when the lesson/activity is concluded.
- Ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and that this use is recorded in the lesson plan.

- Ensure that all photographs/images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability.
- Be able to justify the photographs/images made.
- Do not take photographs in one to one situations.
- Do not take, display or distribute photographs/images of students unless there is consent to do so.

### **Social contact**

Employees, volunteers and LGB should not share any personal information with students and should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. If a student seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise his/her professional judgment in making a response and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Employees should not have any social relationships with any students under the age of 18, unless they are family members or close family friends, in which case they should advise the Headteacher. Unplanned contact should be reported to the Headteacher.

### **Social networking**

Social media can include any website where comments and/or information can be shared and considered to be in the public domain, for example photo sharing and blogs, as well as the more well-known social networking sites such as twitter and Facebook. The basic premise is to exercise common sense. Employees are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by the school, students, colleagues, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time even when privacy settings are used, or material is posted on a closed profile or group. Be mindful that what is published may be public for a long time.

#### **In any circumstances:**

- Be aware of safeguarding issues and materials which may adversely impact on children (and vulnerable adults). Challenge and report inappropriate use of media.
- Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Respect copyright and data protection laws as well as maintaining confidential information.
- Do not publish or report information or conversations that are accessed through your employment at the school without explicit permission. 'Conversations' may be oral, written or digital exchanges.
- Do not use swear words, obscene or derogatory language.
- It is unacceptable to use social media in a manner that would generally be accepted as a hostile attempt to hurt, upset or embarrass another person, or groups of people, associated with the school.
- Never refer to third parties, suppliers, or employees in a way that these individuals can be identified.
- Never represent or reproduce the CST logo or the school logo without authorisation.
- Do not publish images relating to users of the school's services unless their prior consent has been given in writing.

Communication between students and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

Employees and volunteers must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal email address or social networking details to students unless the need to do so is agreed in writing beforehand with senior management.

It is recommended that employees ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

**Employees must NOT have any students or any ex-students under the age of 18 as friends on their social networking sites** unless they are family members or close family friends. In this event, employees are required to notify their line manager. Employees are advised not to have any online friendships with any young people under the age of 18, unless they are family members or close family friends. In this event employees are advised to notify their line manager. Employees are advised not to have online friendships with parents or carers of students, or members of the LGB/Trustees. Where such online friendships exist, employees must ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained.

Employees must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by and of the school and should not post material which may damage the reputation of the school or cause concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the school, such comments are inappropriate.

### **In your personal use of social media:**

- Ensure that your online activities or expressed opinions do not interfere with or conflict with your job or your colleagues (for example many roles within schools are viewed as role models; views expressed should not conflict with this).
- If you are identifiable as a school employee on social networks, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you should present yourself with colleagues and users of school services.
- Do not download or copy school materials without permission.
- If you publish content to a website not owned by the school, and it has something to do with work that you do as an employee of the school (e.g. evident from your profile), use a disclaimer such as: The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of my employer.
- Maintain boundaries between your personal and professional lives, including customising your privacy settings and avoiding inappropriate personal information becoming visible to members of the group (please note that information can be passed on by individuals that have been allowed access and any inappropriate views or content will be viewed as contravening the Code of Conduct).

Where actions in using social media are judged to contravene the school's Code of Conduct employees may face disciplinary action and potentially summary dismissal (dismissal without notice). This may include activities outside working hours. You should only use social media in your capacity as an employee of the school where this is an appropriate communication tool. This must be specifically endorsed by your Headteacher.

If you are not using social media to support you directly in your employed position, you should always access this in your personal time and you must not use school equipment.

### Whistleblowing and cyberbullying

Any matter that concerns child protection should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If employees have reason to believe that a student has been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation, this must be reported to the **police first** and then the DSL.

Employees who have concerns about any alleged abuse or inappropriate use of ICT resources, virtual learning environments, camera/recording equipment, telephony, social networking sites, email or internet facilities or inappropriate communications, whether by students, parents, carers or employees, or others should alert their line manager. Where a concern relates to their line manager, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

Cyberbullying can be experienced by employees as well as students. Employees should notify their line manager, following the procedures set down within the Dignity at Work policy. The school will endeavour to protect employees and stop any inappropriate conduct.

### Mobile telephones and devices

Ideally, personal electronic devices such as mobile phones and tablets should not be taken into the classroom. If secure storage is not available on site, devices taken into the classroom should be switched off and stored safely out of sight of students. Permission must be sought from the Headteacher before using personal electronic devices in the classroom for educational purposes.

During their working hours, employees should only use their mobile phones during off duty breaks or in the case of an emergency.

### Acceptable use of ICT facilities and usage monitoring

Employees must follow Acceptable Use Agreement.

There is no expectation of privacy when using any digital technologies owned or operated by CST.

All activity when using any digital technologies owned or operated by CST may be logged and recorded to investigate suspected breaches of policy. Monitoring may include: live screen capture, internet traffic logs, CCTV, communications (telephone, email, instant messaging) electronic storage.

Employees using electronic means to communicate, should maintain the same standards of professionalism, appropriateness, care and scrutiny as they would if writing a letter using CST/school headed notepaper, remembering that electronic mail is covered by Data Protection legislation. They should only communicate on school business if it is a requirement of their post.

Posting, creating, accessing, transmitting, downloading, uploading or storing any of the following material is likely to amount to gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal unless it is part of an authorised investigation. This list is not exhaustive:

- Pornographic or sexually suggestive material or images of children or adults which may be construed as such in the circumstances (that is, writing, texting, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature).
- Any other type of offensive, obscene or discriminatory material or criminal material or material which is liable to cause distress or embarrassment to CST, the school or others.

If students are found to have accessed such images, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

## **Personal use of school equipment**

Employees are not normally permitted to use school or office equipment, e.g. computers, facsimile machines, photocopiers and the like, for personal use. Employees must not allow the school address to be used for personal mail deliveries without prior authorisation from the Headteacher.

Employees may use school internet facilities for occasional personal matters during their breaks but must not use it to access social media for personal purposes.

Employees are not permitted to use work telephones or email facilities for personal use during their working hours unless there are exceptional circumstances such as an urgent need to contact someone in an emergency. Time spent on such usage must be kept to a minimum. Similarly, employees should also inform friends and family not to contact them at work unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **Health and safety**

The school places a high priority on providing a safe working and learning environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the health and safety of employees, students and visitors.

It is expected that all employees and volunteers will take responsibility for the health & safety of themselves, colleagues, students and any visitor in the school and when on external school activities. Also, that they will ensure that they are fully aware of their own duties and responsibilities under the health and safety at work legislation and take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

Employees must inform their manager if they have, or take up, additional employment, particularly where this means that their total number of hours worked exceeds an average of 48 hours per week, or which could have a detrimental effect on their health and safety. A copy of the school's Health and Safety Policy is available from the School Office.

## **Political and religious neutrality whilst at work**

Employees must ensure that they do not allow personal or political opinions to interfere with their work duties.

The promotion of extremist religious views and partisan political views in any format will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to offer a balanced presentation of views and opinions to students.

## **Appointment and other employment matters**

All employees involved in recruitment should ensure that appointments 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. CST's Safer Recruitment procedures 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.

Employees should make the Headteacher/CST aware of any personal relations with other employees or LGB that might lead to a conflict of interests or cast doubt on the integrity of the school/service; 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.

## **Equality issues**

All employees should ensure that they are aware of the school's policies relating to equality issues and managing diversity and that all such policies are complied with fully, both in letter and spirit.

It is a personal responsibility of all employees to take all necessary steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against members of the wider school community or other employees on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic and national origins, sex, marital status, domestic circumstances, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, ethical beliefs, or trade union activity/membership. Employees must also do whatever is reasonable and appropriate to promote equality of opportunity in whatever way and whenever they can.

## **Financial regulations and resources**

The school receives a substantial income from public sources. It is essential that the school maintains the highest standards of conduct in financial matters and seeks to maintain high standards of integrity and ethical behaviour. Financial procedures and regulations are in place and employees are expected to ensure that decision making is open and fair and complies with these.

The Financial Handbook and School Finance Policy create a framework of financial controls within which the employees of the school must operate. These regulations are designed to protect the school, CST and individual members of employees. Failure to comply with these regulations may lead to the loss of assets, significant delays in payments to employees and suppliers, and additional work for colleagues, as well as potential for disciplinary procedures.

Employees must ensure that they use funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the school/CST. All employees, volunteers and LGB should ensure that they have an appropriate awareness of the CST's financial regulations and that their actions fully comply with those regulations.

## **Outside commitments**

Employees' off-duty hours are their own personal concern. However, employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take up any outside activities or employment, whether paid or unpaid, or behave in such a way that may bring the reputation of the school into disrepute outside working hours, particularly if they live and work in the local community. Off duty activities should not expose them to a significant health risk.

No employee will enter into extra or private tuition, or childcare arrangements with parents without the permission of the Headteacher.

The school will not prevent an employee from undertaking additional employment providing it does not conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in CST or the school and does not in any way affect performance of their duties and responsibilities whilst they are at work, or where their current position could confer advantage to their private interest/personal gain.

If there is a conflict the manager can ask for an employee to discontinue with the conflicting private business interests.

## **Personal interests**

An employee's life away from work is their personal concern. Employees should not however, subordinate their work to their private interests or put themselves in a position where their job, or CST's or the school's interests and their own personal interests conflict. This includes behaviour which, because of the nature of employment/activity, would undermine CST's or the school's confidence or trust in the employee.

An example of such behaviour relates to school employees facing criminal charges. The school requires all employees to notify their Headteacher without delay of any criminal investigation, charge or caution imposed upon them, with the exception of minor driving offences if their job does not include the use of a car. These rules apply whether incurred on or off duty.

As required by the Personal/Business Interests Policy, all employees, LGB and volunteers must declare to the Headteacher any financial or non-financial interests that it could reasonably be considered may bring about a conflict with the school's interests.

All employees, LGB and volunteers are required to declare membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct.

Employees are also required to declare an interest if it comes to their attention that they have a connection or potential connection with any business or organisation (including voluntary bodies) which deals with CST or the school.

### **Gifts and hospitality**

All employees must comply with the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Personal gifts must not be given to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a student should be consistent with the school's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

### **Sponsorship**

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

Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service neither employees nor their partners, spouses nor relatives may benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full prior disclosure to the Headteacher/CST of any such interest. Similarly, where the school, through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

### **Relationships with the school community and service users**

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve, including colleagues, and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community ensuring that discriminatory practices are avoided at all times.

### **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 CST and properly recorded. 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.

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.

### **Separation of roles during tendering**

Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the school. Headteachers or senior managers who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness. Employees must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors and potential contractors and sub-contractors.

Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors, should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

Employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses or consultancies run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

**Code of Conduct**

**Declaration by employee/volunteer/Local Governing Body member:**

I have read and understood the school's Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its contents. I understand that compliance is a requirement of my ongoing employment and/or involvement with the school.

**Signed:** .....

**Name:** .....

**Job title:** .....

**Date:** .....

