



## **Code of Conduct for School Employees**

**2021-22**

**Policy Date:** January 2016

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For further advice and guidance in relation to this policy, please contact HR ONE at [hrdirect@devon.gov.uk](mailto:hrdirect@devon.gov.uk) or on 01392 385555.

*EP spoke with HR Sept 2021; this is most up to date version*

**This policy was adopted by the Governing Body and ratified**

**The Topsham School**

**Sept 2021**

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## **Objective, Scope and Principles**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all employees are expected to observe. Employees working in schools are role models, are in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, every employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

In adopting this policy the school is committed to working towards creating a working environment in which all employees are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and where unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees. This Code of Conduct does not form part of the contract of employment.

Casual and self-employed workers, agency staff and volunteers working in the school would also be expected to observe the standards of behaviour set out in this document.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Conditions of Service for Schools Teachers have a statutory obligation to adhere to the most recent 'Teachers' Standards' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

### **1. Compliance**

Employees must familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

Employees must complete the form in Appendix 3 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

### **2. Disciplinary Action**

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

### **3. Setting an Example**

3.1 This Code helps all employees to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

3.2 Employees must not discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act

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2010 or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are:-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

3.3 Employees must set good examples of behaviour and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Standards expected of employees can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 Employees must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

3.5 Employees must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

#### **4. Safeguarding Pupils**

4.1 Employees have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse and neglect.

4.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Child Protection.

4.3 Employees must make themselves aware of the name of the school's current DSO. This information is available on notice boards in the staffroom and around the school.

4.4 Employees must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

4.5 Employees must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

4.6 Employees are provided with access to the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and must become familiar with these documents.

4.7 Employees are provided with access to the DfE Statutory Guidance Document 'Keeping children safe in education' and must read the document.

4.8 Employees are provided with access to of the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' and must read the document.

## **5. Relationships with Pupils**

5.1 Employees must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Employees should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form is available at Appendix 2 of this document for declaration of such relationships.

5.2 Physical relationships with pupils, regardless of their age, are strictly forbidden and may lead to a criminal conviction. This may also apply to former pupils and advice must be sought before commencing any such relationship.

5.3 Employees must treat pupils with respect and dignity and must not demean or undermine them, their parents or carers, or work colleagues.

5.4 Employees must not behave in a way that may be perceived as sarcastic, nor should they make jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrass or humiliate pupils, discriminate against or favour pupils.

## **6. Professional Relationships with Colleagues**

6.1 Employees must help create a positive working environment and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. Examples of acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour can be found in Appendix 1.

6.2 Employees must strive toward and promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that employees will attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case they should refer the matter to their line manager.

## **7. Honesty and Integrity**

7.1 Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

7.2 Employees must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer your concerns to the attention of your Headteacher / Chair of Governors.

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7.3 Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality from suppliers or associates of the school, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from parents. Personal gifts from employees to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

7.4 Employees must make known to the Headteacher / Governing Body all financial and non-financial interests that could bring them into conflict with the school's interests.

7.5 All personal relationships with contractors, or potential contractors should be made known by the employee to the Headteacher / Governing Body with responsibility for the contract.

7.6 Employees must not be involved in any recruitment process if they have a personal relationship with the applicant inside or outside of work.

7.7 Without fear of recrimination, employees can report any impropriety or breach of procedures using the process laid out within the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

## **8. Conduct Outside of Work**

8.1 Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

8.2 Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Policy.

8.3 Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

## **9. Employment outside of School**

9.1 Employees may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school. In line with the Statement of Particulars, support employees who are employed on or above Grade E must seek the consent of the Headteacher should they wish to take up employment outside the school.

## **10. E-Safety and Internet Use**

10.1 Employees must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work.

10.2 Employees must not use equipment belonging to the school to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing pornographic images or

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links to them be brought into the workplace. Doing so will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the employee to continue to work in schools.

10.3 Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

10.4 Employees must exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where employees could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

10.5 Employees must not link themselves with the school on any social network site they use unless with prior consent of the Head teacher.

10.6 Employees must not respond to negative comments posted online but bring this to the attention of the Headteacher.

10.7 Employees must only contact pupils via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.

10.8 Employees must report to the Headteacher any contact by a pupil by an inappropriate route.

10.9 Photographs/still images or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the schools procedures on school equipment.

## **11. Confidentiality**

11.1 Employees must not reveal confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

11.2 Employees are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by another employee), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

## **12. Dress and Appearance**

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12.1 Employees must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.

12.2 Employees must not dress in a manner that could be regarded by others as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

12.3 Employees must not wear clothes with political or other contentious slogans.

### **13. Adopt the Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body The Topsham school on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

### **14. Consultation**

This policy is provided following consultation with trade unions/professional associations and will apply to all employees. This policy is for the Governing Body of schools to consider for adoption. Should the Governing Body wish to make changes to this model Code of Conduct, the required consultation must be undertaken with the recognised trade unions/professional associations.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Examples of Acceptable Behaviour**

People behave acceptably when they:

- Afford dignity, trust and respect for everyone and themselves;
- Have awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others and only make reasonable and manageable demands;
- Communicate honestly and openly, clearly stating what they need and expect of others;
- Provide and are receptive to honest feedback based on evidence; and
- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in an appropriate way.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour:**

- Using aggressive language, threatening, ridiculing, ignoring people or repeatedly shouting;
- Telephoning people at home unnecessarily (for example, demanding work when the person is absent due to sickness or ill health);
- Focusing only on weaknesses;
- Bringing up details of someone's private life inappropriately;
- Leaving impossibly long lists of tasks and making unreasonable demands;
- Criticising people or maliciously gossiping about them in their absence;
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- Comments or jokes, about distinctive peoples and nationalities;
- Frequent comments about aspects of physical appearance or using forms of address that are demeaning;
- Threatening or implying, without reason, that, as a colleague, you will cause the person to lose his/her job or fail to get a promotion or suffer some other form of career difficulty or financial disadvantage;
- Coercing someone to join the harassment/bullying of another person;
- Excluding or marginalising someone or refusing to engage with them appropriately.

This list is not exhaustive. It is simply a guide to help individuals consider their own and others behaviour and gain understanding of what behaviours are unacceptable in the workplace.

## **1. Standards Expected of Employees**

The standards expected of all employees include but are not limited to:

- maintaining standards of behaviour in keeping with the interests and standing of the school/DCC. This includes behaviour outside of working hours and in

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any form that is visible to the public, including social networking or any other electronic medium

- devoting full attention while at work to the duties of their position and in doing so acting with responsibility, good judgement and in good faith
- carrying out any reasonable instructions given by those with authority to do so
- not divulging to any unauthorised person or making personal use of confidential information connected with the school/DCC, either intentionally or through negligent behaviour
- observing the rules, regulations and instructions adopted by the school/DCC
- following appropriate safeguarding procedures
- participating fully in any investigation into alleged incidents and/or allegations including attending meetings as directed
- using electronic communications appropriately
- ensuring that information brought to light as a result of any investigation is treated with discretion
- carrying out their role consistently with any standards set by their appropriate professional body
- taking steps to address any unacceptable behaviour
- treating colleagues and third parties with dignity and respect.

In addition to the above, the expectations of those employed in management roles are to:

- ensure the standards expected from all employees are role-modelled, monitored and managed effectively
- effectively manage all applicable statutory and non-statutory obligations
- appropriately manage all alleged incidents and/or allegations.

This list is not exhaustive.

## Appendix 2

### **Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Employees must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils.

<b>Employee's Name</b>	<b>Pupil Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:-

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed .....

Date .....

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**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher**

**Appendix 3**

**Confirmation of compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name .....

Position/Post Held.....

Signed .....

Date .....

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher**