Code of Conduct for Employees

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Document Control

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Introduction

Wirksworth Junior School values and respects all members of the community. Colleagues are expected to work in co-operation and collaboration, within an ethos of mutual trust and confidence. All employees and volunteers must be committed to promoting the safety, welfare and interests of children as paramount. Staff are expected to place the wellbeing, development and progress of children at the heart of their professional practice.

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all school employees. To serve the school, you should implement its policies, and perform your duties, with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

The purpose of the Code is to assist you in carrying out your job by making clear the standards of behaviour the school requires you to meet. It incorporates the existing laws, regulations and conditions of service you should be most aware of in your work for the school.

Scope

The Code applies to all employees of the school. The Code also applies to contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work experience placements working on behalf of the school.

You should read the Code in conjunction with professional standards, other school policies, requirements and guidance regarding standards of conduct in particular areas of work. This list is not exhaustive and you should familiarise yourself with any relevant guidance which may be provided in relation to your particular area of work. You should address any further queries you have to the Headteacher.

Accountability

As an employee, you must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law.

If you fail to comply with the Code's provisions, this may result in action under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

Maintenance of standards

You should inform the Headteacher if you identify any deficiency in the service provided by the school, resulting from breaches of this Code. If you have concerns about raising the deficiency with the Headteacher, and wish to maintain confidentiality, you can use the school's Confidential Reporting Code. Under this code you should make disclosures about possible malpractice to:

a) Your line manager
b) Where (a) is inappropriate, the Headteacher or a senior leader
c) Where (a) and (b) are inappropriate, you should approach the Chair of Governors
d) Where the disclosure relates to potential harm/abuse of a child, you should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), contact details can be found in the Child Protection procedures and on the Derbyshire County Council website (www.derbyshire.gov.uk).
e) If the concern is regarding financial irregularities or fraud then you should report to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. Where this is not appropriate you should contact the Audit Service at the Local Authority.

Honesty and Integrity

You must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in your work. You should treat all pupils/students, colleagues, parents/carers and visitors with respect and professional courtesy. You should maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which may lead any reasonable adult to question your behaviour, motivations or intentions

To maintain high standards of working practice with and/or around children, you are expected to comply with 'safe working practice' guidance.

Refer to Appendix 1 for specific policies held in school.

Safeguarding Pupils/Students

You have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

Physical abuse
Sexual abuse
Emotional abuse
Neglect

Specific safeguarding issues as outlined by the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which includes responsibilities in relation to Prevent.

You must be aware of who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is in school and know how to contact them if you wish to raise a concern about the safety of a child.

You must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their welfare and safety. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect. Please ensure information about your concern is kept confidential and this is only shared on a need-to-know basis. The school uses My Concern, and this should be where you record your concerns. Do not keep copies in Microsoft Word or any word-processing software.

You must comply with school policy that supports the wellbeing of pupils, and this includes co-operation and collaboration with external agencies that support the welfare of children/young people.

There is a duty to safeguard pupils, including the duty to report any concerns about a pupil, and to have a working knowledge of the procedures in place for this. You have a professional responsibility to inform an appropriate person if it is believed that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the wellbeing and safety of any child/young person or group of children or young people, including low level concerns. You should know about and have access to the Confidential Reporting Code and the Whistleblowing Procedure and feel able to use this.

Low level concerns will be recorded to identify patterns in school procedures/culture in-line with KCSIE 2026. These records will be used to support the change/updating of school policies and training offered to all employees, to keep children safe from harm.

Ensure that any inappropriate content found on school IT systems is reported to the DSL immediately to ensure filtering is appropriate and is regularly updated to keep children safe.

Setting an example

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. You must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same and avoid putting yourself at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. You must follow guidance in line with safer working practices.

You must not have any electronic communication, other than via the school's platforms, and/or accept as friends, pupils under the age of 18 including ex pupils, this includes the use of personal mobiles, and or social networking sites or media. Expectations in relation to staff use of electronic communication, including the internet, are detailed in the school's IT Acceptable Use Policy, and the Social Media policy listed in Appendix 1. You have a responsibility to familiarise yourself with the policy and adhere to the requirements entailed.

Refer to Appendix 1 for specific policies held in school and available on the school's Microsoft share-point site.

Dress and Appearance

Your appearance, dress and behaviour are expected to promote appropriate boundaries and working relationships between the pupils and the staff/volunteer body, as role models and responsible adults in a position of trust. You should dress in ways that are appropriate and relevant to your role. In particular, staff should aim to confine sportswear to the specific, relevant parts of the timetable. You should dress in ways that are not likely to cause offense, embarrassment, distract or give rise to misunderstanding.

Conduct Outside Work

You must not behave in a manner which any reasonable adult would question your suitability to work with children or young people. You must not engage in conduct outside work which could easily damage your own reputation and that of the school and this is especially important in and around our immediate local community.

Disclosure of information

The school is committed to open government and to rights of public scrutiny and participation. Legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, requires that certain types of information must be made available to the public and other recognised third parties and to employees. Advice and guidance on the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts is available from the Legal Services' Division at County Hall and requests may be made through the Headteacher.

You have a responsibility to safeguard the security and confidentiality of personal information you hold and you should ensure that only the appropriate amount of information required is provided to those who have a clearly established and legitimate need to use it. Advice and guidance on your existing statutory or common law obligations regarding confidentiality is also available to the school from the Legal Services' Division at County Hall.

You should not use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

Relationships

The Local Community and Service Users and Other Employees

You should always remember your responsibilities to the community you serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all users, groups and individuals within that community. These responsibilities apply equally to your conduct with fellow employees, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work experience placements.

You are expected to work as part of a whole school team.

You should take positive steps to understand the roles of other colleagues in the children's workforce. You are expected to cooperate with other professional colleagues who have a role in enabling children to thrive and succeed.

You should follow the school's ethos and approach in any communication with parents and carers.

Contractors

If you engage in the provision of work under contract or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you should formally declare that relationship to your Headteacher/Chair of Governors.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, in accordance with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

As a private citizen, you should be aware of possible conflicts of interest when you buy goods or use the services of firms who have dealings with the school, and you should follow official procedures relating to the disclosure of any such transactions.

Equalities

You must comply with the school's Equalities Policy and legal requirements relating to equality issues. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, preventing unlawful discrimination in all its activities and to valuing diversity.

Appointment and other employment matters

If you are involved in the appointment of employees, you should be aware that it is unlawful for you to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, you should not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant or have/have had a close association with the applicant.

You should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions adjustments for another employee who is a relative or with whom you have a close association.

Where you have been provided with a "benefit in kind" or other untaxed income, whether this has been funded from the school's delegated budget, private school fund or parental contributions this must be formally recorded within the school for notification to the County Council. Where you are uncertain about whether you need to declare a "benefit in kind" or untaxed income you should discuss this with your Headteacher, who should consult with the County Council's Shared Service Centre.

Taking other employment

You should not undertake additional employment (paid or unpaid), or allow your name to be put forward for consideration for such work, if your proposed additional work either will or has the potential to:

- Create a conflict of interest.
- Overlap with official duties.
- Make use of material to which you have access by virtue of your position.
- Weaken public confidence in the school.

You should, in any case, inform the Headteacher of any proposed secondary employment.

Personal interests

Personal interests must not conflict with your public duty. An official position or information acquired in the course of your employment must not be used to further personal interests or for the interests of others.

You must declare to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors any:

- External financial or non-financial interest in any existing or proposed contract with the school or other organisational decision.
- Membership of any organisation which could conflict with the school's interests.

You should make any such declaration in writing to the Headteacher. Any such declaration by the Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors.

Stewardship

You must ensure that you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner and must not utilise property, vehicles or other facilities of the school for personal use unless authorised in advance to do so. You should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the school.

Personal Use of Internet and Email – any personal use must be in accordance with the school's current IT and Acceptable Use Policy.

Personal Telephone Calls:

- Personal mobile phones should be used for any outgoing personal telephone calls, other than in exceptional circumstances (eg no signal available). In these circumstances the school telephone may be used, following the school's procedure for such use, recording and payment.
- Such outgoing calls/texts and personal incoming calls should occur infrequently and be kept as short as possible. For those working with children, calls/texts should not be made/taken during

lessons, except in emergencies. As stated in the IT and Acceptable Use Policy, 'Staff should not engage in 'recreational' chatting during working time, on email or through instant messaging, that results in lost productivity or distracts other employees from their work.'
- School mobile phones should not be used for personal use, except in emergency.
- Accredited professional association/union representatives may utilise the school telephone in accordance with the 'Facilities Agreement' available from Services2Schools.

Intellectual Property is property which enjoys legal protection and is a result of intellectual effort, including patents, copyright, trademarks, designs and software. Where developed in the course of your duties, such intellectual property is the property of the school. You should not make use of the school's intellectual property to conduct private work.

Any copies of material taken for use within the school must only be as allowed under the Copyright Act and under the appropriate licensing agreement.

Corruption

You must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for you to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or neglecting to do something or showing favour or disfavour to any person in your official capacity.

Hospitality and gifts

You should only accept hospitality in the form of refreshments/attendance at events if there is a genuine need to impart information or to represent the school. You should also ensure that accepting the hospitality does not create a conflict of interest and is not likely to cause embarrassment to the school.

You should report the offer of hospitality, whether accepted or not, to the Headteacher, and should ensure that all such offers are recorded in the appropriate hospitality register.

If gifts are offered or you suspect that an improper motive exists, you should always decline the offer and report it to your Headteacher/Chair. This includes any preferential rates offered for goods and services. Headteachers should report the offer to the Chair of Governors regardless of whether the offer is accepted or declined.

Sponsorship

Where an outside organisation is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the Code's provisions concerning acceptance of hospitality or gifts and working with contractors apply. No sponsorship deal should be made without the prior agreement of the Governing Body.

Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service, you must declare in writing to the Headteacher/Governing Body any possible conflict of interest or any benefit you or a member of your family, or anybody with whom you have a close association, is likely to receive. Similarly, where the school is providing sponsorship in the community, you should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

Contact with the media

Any enquiries from the media on work-related matters should be referred to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors who are advised to contact the Local Authority's Public Relations Division. You should seek formal authorisation from the Headteacher, who should consult the Public Relations Division, before you speak, write or give interviews to the media.

If you wish to publish books, articles or letters you have written in connection with your duties, you must first consult the Headteacher who will consult with the Governing Body and take legal advice.

Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed in accordance with the school's monitoring and review cycle. The Governing Body may, however, review the Code of Conduct earlier than this in response to new developments, feedback or if they receive recommendations on how it might be improved.

Appendix 1

Sources of Guidance

A number of additional sources of guidance are listed here. However, this list is not exhaustive and you should ensure that you familiarise yourself with any relevant guidance which may be provided in respect of your particular area of work. Any queries in this respect should be addressed to the Headteacher. All statutory policies can be found on the school website and the staff Microsoft Share-point.

Personnel Policies and Procedures of the school

- Terms and Conditions of Employment
- DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026)
- Intimate Care Policy
- Confidential Reporting Code (also known as the Whistle Blowing Policy)
- Disciplinary Procedures
- IT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Grievance Procedures
- Dealing with Complaints of Harassment
- Managing Allegations of Abuse against School Staff
- Any school produced guidance on 'safer working practice'
- Code of conduct for volunteers, contractors, and agency staff.
- Staff handbook – updated annually
- Financial Regulations, incorporating Standing Orders policy
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Yong People in Education Settings
- Teachers' Standards 2012 (see below)
- Social Media Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Low-level concerns policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2024

Appendix 2

Teachers' Standards 2012

The section from the document relating to conduct, as opposed to teaching practice, follows:

Preamble

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date, and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes that set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others,
    - not undermining fundamental British values, including
    - democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual
    - respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and
    - beliefs
  - ensuring personal beliefs are not expressed in ways
    - which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to
    - break the law

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Guidance for staff on making references

If you have been asked to give a reference for a staff member, parent or child, and you wish to place it on headed note paper, this **must go through the head teacher.**

All references should be factual and should not contain opinions.

If the reference being made is a personal reference, it must be made known that this is not the opinion of the school and should not be put on school-headed note paper.