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Code of Conduct Policy

Introduction

The Trust is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all Trust employees.

Each school will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This code of conduct sets out the standards expected and the duty upon staff to abide by it.

Staff should be aware that this code of conduct forms part of the school's disciplinary rules for staff. As a result, failure to comply could result in disciplinary action.

The role of the schools within the Trust

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children. Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children.

The role of school staff within the Trust

The Teachers Standards 2012 state that teachers, including Headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

All school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All school and college staff have a responsibility to read and understand the schools Safeguarding Policy document and **Keeping children Safe in Education 2016 Part 1** and to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed. In addition to working with the designated safeguarding lead staff members should be aware that they may also be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children.

Purpose, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the school, including the Headteacher, Head of School and Executive Headteacher;
- all staff that are attached to the school.

The Code of Conduct does not apply to:

- peripatetic staff who are centrally employed by the LA;

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- employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners). (Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body)

Principles of Professional Practice

All staff as appropriate to the role and/or job description of the individual, must:

- place the well-being 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 pupils progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
- treat pupils 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 well-being 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.

Setting an example

All staff who work in the school set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is, and is not, acceptable.

Safeguarding students

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student to the school's Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Child Protection. The school's DSP is Mrs Richards.

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This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members. It is also important to note that any staff member can refer concerns to children's social care directly.

Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Student development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of students.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues, and with external agencies where necessary, to support the development of students.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

Conduct in relation to students

The law recognises that staff act in loco parentis in respect of students in their care and must act in the role of reasonable parent in the school context. Through their actions staff must act in accordance with this duty of care to ensure at all times that the safety and welfare of pupils is accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Interaction with students should always be appropriate to their age and gender. Staff should not touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent, unnecessary or familiar, or use inappropriate language. Particular care may be necessary when supervising pupils in out of school activities.

Teaching materials should be appropriate to the age and gender of pupils. Particular care should be taken that sex or health education materials are appropriate and consistent with the school's policies.

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When holding meetings with students on sensitive issues, staff should exercise proper professional judgement over the arrangements for the meeting. They should safeguard their own position by, for instance, considering the need for a second adult to be present or leaving the door open.

Corporal punishment, defined as any intentional application of force as punishment, is illegal and may render a member of staff liable to criminal action as well as action under the school's disciplinary procedures. Corporal punishment includes any form of physical chastisement.

Physical intervention will not constitute corporal punishment where its purpose is to avert an immediate danger of injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, any person including a pupil. In such circumstances, the element of restraint should be the minimum necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm.

Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. in teaching PE), that contact should be the minimum necessary for the purpose and comply with accepted good practice. Particular care should be taken in helping pupils with physical or other disabilities (e.g. in lifting). Further guidance is available in Codes of Practice produced by the professional associations.

A policy on first aid is agreed by each school and each school has sufficient members of staff appropriately trained in its application, and in any event always has a first aider on the premises. The School's policy indicates the recording process for any incidents or accidents and is clearly linked to the School's Health and Safety Policy.

Following any incident where a member of staff has reason to believe that their actions may be open to misinterpretation, the Head should be immediately notified or DSP for child protection.

In every school, either the Head or another teacher will have designated responsibility for child protection. In the event that a member of staff suspects or receives allegations that a child is the subject of abuse, a report should immediately be made in strict confidence to the designated teacher. In the case of this school.....

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Agreed guidelines on procedures where staff are accused of physical or sexual abuse of pupils are contained in the document "Teachers Facing an Allegation of Physical/Sexual Abuse: Guidelines on Practice and Procedure".

It is the responsibility of all working in each school to ensure that they are up to date on all relevant policies and procedures.

Honesty and integrity

Staff 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.

Conduct outside work

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

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff 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.

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential.

For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed

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outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person, any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

Only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about school.

Transporting students

In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff may agree to transport students. Wherever possible 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. They must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Educational Visits and School Clubs

Staff 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. Staff remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply. The school has a policy on educational visits which forms part of this Code of Conduct.

Social Networking

There is an ever developing series of social media applications designed to allow people to keep in touch electronically. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook are just a few examples of these. The guidance contained within this code of conduct is a summary and does not replace the e-safety policy of each school which all staff must read and adhere to.

Staff must always consider carefully any action they take when engaging in social media activities. Staff must not engage in any social media activity which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

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For example, School staff **MUST NOT** accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of the school. Personal Facebook accounts and similar should not be used to discuss any matters pertaining to your professional role.

When using Twitter, both your personal and professional account, you **DO NOT** follow the Twitter accounts of parents or students. No matter how good your intentions, following a parent or student's Twitter account can give the appearance of favouritism.

The Trust recognises that 91% of 13-18 year olds use Facebook/Instagram etc. and that a significant proportion of adults have social media accounts to enable them to stay in touch with family and friends. Staff are expected to read the e-safety policy of the school and carefully follow all guidance and instructions.

Technology

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 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 for any images made such as those used for school web sites, productions or other purposes.

Staff 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. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place. Students who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc in the teaching environment.

Staff 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.

Using images of pupils for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

When using a photograph the following guidance must be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the student
- if the student is named, avoid using the photograph

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- 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 when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose.
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify the images made
- ensure that images are not stored on any personal equipment

Financial Regulations

All staff with financial responsibilities should comply with the powers delegated by the Governing Body.

Materials and equipment provided by the school should not be used for purposes unconnected with employment. Staff should always use public funds to the best advantage of the school and community and adhere to high standards of probity in their use.

There is a requirement to report to the Headteacher or other relevant person any indirect or direct financial interest in any contract or other matter involving the school. This is particularly relevant in cases of tendering or in the selling of surplus equipment or property. The Headteacher should disclose such interest to the Chair of Governors.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, loan, fee, hospitality or other reward which influences the way in which they carry out their duties. They should not influence or be influenced unfairly in the way they carry out their duties by ties of kinship or friendship, or by some other association or loyalty.

Care should be taken to avoid any conflict of interest between activities outside the school and professional responsibilities. Staff should not undertake work or engage in activities in their own time through which they seek to exercise unfair advantage by virtue of their position. In no case should outside activities bring the school into disrepute.

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Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance

Staff and Governors must be careful to ensure that nothing they say, or do, brings the school's name into disrepute. Gossip in our communities can be very damaging. Staff should not gossip, or speak inappropriately about the school, students, parents, staff or Governors, including discussing incidents. The reputation of our school is very precious. It takes a long time to build and can be knocked down in a moment.

All staff 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 peers, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the school into disrepute.

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school's premises.

Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the school or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

The school strongly advises that the involvement of students in any form of social networking, email or texting must be approached with extreme caution. If there is any doubt about whether communication with students is appropriate advice should be sought from a member of a senior management team.

This code of conduct will serve to confirm the current very good practice of staff working in Lydiate Learning Trust.

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