

Staff Code of Conduct

APPROVING BODY	Trust Executive Board
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SUPERSEDES VERSION	5
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FURTHER INFORMATION / GUIDANCE	• Redhill Trust Disciplinary Policy • KCSiE 2025

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary policy and the Teachers' Standards.
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations the Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to the CEO/Regional Director/Head teacher.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary policy.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment, see disciplinary policy.

3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

- 3.1 All staff must have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), which is statutory guidance for safeguarding in schools. Staff must read Part 1 (or Annex A where applicable) and understand:
 - 3.1.1 Their individual responsibility to safeguard children
 - 3.1.2 How to identify and respond to concerns
 - 3.1.3 The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- 3.2 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.3 Staff must recognise that safeguarding risks now explicitly include online harms, such as:
 - 3.3.1 misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories

3.3.2 online exploitation and grooming

3.3.3 risks linked to artificial intelligence (AI) and digital content

3.4 This includes reporting any low-level concerns about a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer or contractor to the Headteacher. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

3.4.1 Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and

3.4.2 does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the ‘LADO. All employees have a key role to play in identifying child protection concerns as the safeguarding of children and their welfare is paramount. Therefore, we must ensure all school personnel (and volunteers) are appointed following safer recruitment guidelines and procedures, Disclosure and Barring Service checked, trained in child protection procedures, understand their roles and comply with the code of conduct.

3.5 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

3.6 Staff must recognise that poor or irregular attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding risk, including exploitation or abuse. Attendance must be considered as part of safeguarding responsibilities.

3.7 To do this employees must have fully read and understood our child protection / safeguarding policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

3.8 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

4 Duty of care

4.1 Staff must:

4.1.1 Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.

4.1.2 Always act, and be seen to act, in our students’ best interests.

4.1.3 Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions.

4.1.4 Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

5 Social Media and Online Content

- 5.1 Staff must maintain the highest standards of professional conduct online. Their digital footprint must not:
 - 5.1.1 undermine public trust in the Trust
 - 5.1.2 bring the Trust into disrepute
 - 5.1.3 compromise safeguarding or professional boundaries
- 5.2 Staff must:
 - 5.2.1 ensure privacy settings are appropriately secure
 - 5.2.2 avoid posting content that could be viewed as discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate
 - 5.2.3 not engage in online behaviour that could call into question their suitability to work with children
- 5.3 Staff must not:
 - 5.3.1 communicate with pupils via personal social media accounts
 - 5.3.2 share personal contact details with pupils
 - 5.3.3 post or share images of pupils without authorisation
- 5.4 In line with KCSIE, recruitment processes will include appropriate pre-employment checks, which may include online searches of shortlisted candidates.

6 Health & Safety

- 6.1 All employees must ensure that they:
 - 6.1.1 Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety policy produced by their Academy, available from the Operations Manager.
 - 6.1.2 Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Trust.
 - 6.1.3 Comply with any hygiene requirements.
 - 6.1.4 Comply with any accident reporting requirements.
 - 6.1.5 Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust, community or visitors.

6.1.6 Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

7 Honesty and personal integrity

- 7.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct within our Trust.
- 7.2 Employees uphold public trust in our Trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - 1.1.1 Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
 - 1.1.2 Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
 - 1.1.3 Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
 - 1.1.4 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.
 - 1.1.5 Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 7.3 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 7.4 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.

8 Tackling discrimination

- 8.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our [Equality statement / Behaviour policy].
- 8.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.

9 Professional boundaries and relationships

- 9.1 Employees in our Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals.

- 9.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.
- 9.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable.
- 9.4 Employees should be aware it is an offence under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003, for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if they do not teach the child.
- 9.5 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.
- 9.6 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation, they should discuss it with the Head teacher immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.

10 Confidentiality and protection of data

- 10.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.
- 10.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to the Head teacher.
- 10.3 The Trust holds and processes data that is protected under the UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Head teacher.
- 10.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of our policies that relate to data including our IT policies.

11 Physical contact with students

- 11.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.
- 11.2 There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age-appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position, then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation.
- 11.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 11.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

12 Social contact with students

- 12.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 12.2 The Trust's advice to staff is not to connect to students via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and that the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.
- 12.3 Our Trust is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of the academy. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Head teacher any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.
- 12.4 Employees should read and understand our Acceptable Use policy.

13 Working one to one with students

13.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

13.1.1 Avoid meeting on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas of the academy.

13.1.2 Where possible, ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room.

13.1.3 Reports to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry or speaks inappropriately.

14 Low Level Concerns

14.1 We must ensure all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the school including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

14.2 We understand that the term 'low level concern' is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

14.2.1 Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and

14.2.2 does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the 'LADO.'

14.3 It is our duty to deal with all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school promptly and appropriately. It is critical that all concerns are shared with the Headteacher, recorded and dealt with.

14.4 We need to ensure that at all times adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and that they act within these. Any concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour that is identified and reported minimises the risk of abuse. The following behaviour needs to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher:

14.4.1 being over friendly with children;

14.4.2 Having favourites;

14.4.3 taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;

14.4.4 Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or

14.4.5 Humiliating students

15 Dress and appearance

15.1 Working in our Trust employees are role models to our students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times (shirt, tie and trousers for men and blouse/skirt/trousers or dress for women). We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate, then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed.

16 Gifts and hospitality

16.1 The Trust has a Gifts and Hospitality policy, and employees should read and adhere to this.

16.2 Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy.

17 Keeping within the law

17.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

17.2 Employees must ensure that they:

17.2.1 Uphold the law at work

17.2.2 Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the Trust, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:

- (a) submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
- (b) breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
- (c) sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
- (d) crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.

17.2.3 Write and tell the Chief Executive Officer and/or Chair of Governors immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Trust (this includes outside of their working hours). The Chief Executive and/or Governors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the Trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

18 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

18.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

18.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the academy or affect the academy's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.

18.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the academy.

18.4 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

19 Review

19.1 This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended annually by the Trust. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.