



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES POLICY

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This policy does not form part of the contract of employment and may be amended from time to time. The School reserves the right to depart from it as appropriate to individual circumstances, whilst always taking account of the ACAS Code of Conduct.

1.0

INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all employees in the Trust to follow.

Wickersley Partnership Trust (hereafter referred to as WPT) aim to ensure the Trust and its schools are an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this Code of Conduct are based on the Professional Standards of the Education and Training Foundation. We expect that all employees will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in these Standards.

All employees in the Trust/School have an influential position, and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all employees, Directors/Governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, Leaders will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, its school and its students.

This should be read in conjunction with the Disciplinary Policy, Professional Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, copies of which are available from HR.

The code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to volunteers and Directors/Governors although, unlike employees, breaches of the code will not be managed through the Disciplinary Policy.

2.0

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 we must also establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct and discipline of staff, which we have set out in part in this Code of Conduct, as well as other relevant policies which we make reference to throughout this Code.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', we should have a Trust Code of Conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, employees/student relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.



3.0

GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

Employees set an example to students. They will:

- Always act, and be seen to act, in the students' best interest
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Professional Standards

4.0

SAFEGUARDING (SEE SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY)

- 4.1** All employees are responsible for safeguarding students and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect students from maltreatment, prevent impairment of students' health or development and ensure that students flourish in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all students to have the best outcomes.
- 4.2** All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.
- 4.3** To do this employees must have fully read and understood our child protection/safeguarding/any other policies, be aware of our systems for keeping students safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.
- 4.4** All employees must cooperate with other employees and with external agencies where necessary.
- 4.5** WPT safeguarding policy and procedures are available in every school and on the Trust website. New employees will also be given copies prior to starting their role in the Trust.

5.0

EMPLOYEES/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- 5.1** Employees will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so. Staff should refer to the Relationships at Work policy for full details and ensure that they comply with it at all times.
- 5.2** Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to employees or to develop an infatuation. If any employees become aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with their Line Manager immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 5.3** Personal contact details should not be exchanged between employees and students. This includes social media profiles (see Social Media Policy).
- 5.4** For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent/carer, or any other person associated with WPT, we expect that they identify this to their Headteacher/CEO/Chair of Directors and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Staff should refer to the Relationships at Work policy for full details and ensure that they comply with it at all times.

6.0

WORKING ONE TO ONE WITH STUDENTS

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. If employees and students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, employees will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access (Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school)
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place
- Reports to their Line Manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.



7.0

SOCIAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

(SEE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY)

- 7.1** 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 only use their devices provided by work for communicating electronically through the Trust Google Accounts with students. Employees should not be using their personal devices to contact students. If there are any exceptional 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 their Line Manager.
- 7.2** WPT's advice to employees is not to connect to students or parents via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and that the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.
- 7.3** WPT is part of a community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of our school. We expect employees to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to their Line Manager any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

8.0

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

(SEE POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY)

- 8.1** There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for employees 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.
- 8.2** 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 and can be reported to their Line Manager if appropriate.
- 8.3** Employees may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, or causing damage to property. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

9.0

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

(SEE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY)

- 9.1 School employees' social media profiles should not be available to students. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students may be able to find them. Employees should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.
- 9.2 Employees should not attempt to contact students or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They should not make any efforts to find students' or parents' social media profiles.
- 9.3 Employees will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify students who are students at the school without their consent.
- 9.4 Employees should be aware of the school's E-Safety Policy (see E-Safety Policy).

10.0

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

(SEE ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY)

- 10.1 Employees will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.
- 10.2 The Trust has the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

11.0

TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

(SEE HARASSMENT/BULLYING POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY)

- 11.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and employees may be subject to.
- 11.2 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.



12.0

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of their role Trust employees are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, employees, students and their parents.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule employees' duty to report safeguarding concerns/child protection concerns to the appropriate body where employees believe a child is at immediate risk of any harm.

13.0

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

- 13.1** Employees will ensure that all information given to the Trust about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.
- 13.2** Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- 13.3** Employees uphold public trust in WPT and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
 - Show respect for the rights of others
 - Not undermining our core values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 13.4** Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of WPT and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 13.5** Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of WPT's property and facilities.

14.0

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

(SEE GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY)

- 14.1** For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all employees must be aware that it is not acceptable for employees to accept bribes. Therefore, any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for the Trust that exceeds a nominal value of £20 must be declared to your Line Manager and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.
- 14.2** Employees should not give gifts to students unless cleared in advance with their Line Manager.
- 14.3** Employees will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £20 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

15.0

DRESS CODE

- 15.1** All employees are role models for the students in the school, therefore they have a responsibility to model appropriate dress and appearance.
- 15.2** The Trust believes it is important for students to look smart and so the same should apply to employees. All employees within the Trust are professionals and there are conventions and standards of dress to uphold.
- 15.3** The image that employees project as professionals is associated with how they present themselves; the image of the Trust and its school in the community is related to how all employees in the Trust/School dress. It is therefore important for employees to dress and groom appropriately when acting in a professional capacity and with due regard from any conclusions parents/visitors may draw from their appearance.
- 15.4** All employees need to look smart and business like. Staff dress is expected to be formal rather than casual;
- generally a suit or smart trousers and a shirt and tie.
 - a dress or smart skirt.
 - clean, smart, low heeled, closed footwear that is appropriate and safe for walking around the school site.



15.5 All staff are expected to dress appropriately which includes dressing in line with the following:

- No denim clothing of any variety or colour;
- No revealing clothing i.e. bare midriffs or significantly low cut or strappy tops;
- No jeans or combat trousers (any cropped trousers must be formal and tailored);
- No shorts – P.E. staff must put on tracksuit bottoms (or equivalent);
- No inappropriate footwear including flip flops or trainers (except P.E. staff);
- No extreme hairstyles or colours;
- Any tattoos must be covered at all times (if it is not practical for a member of staff to cover a tattoo then it is imperative that the tattoo is in no way offensive as agreed by the Local Governing Body);
- Wear up to a maximum of one pair of earrings and no other facial piercings;
- Generally, ties to be worn especially when meeting parents, interviews and evening events;
- It is appropriate to ‘dress down’ for some out of site education visits, however staff are still representing the Trust/School even in an informal environment and whilst casual dress is acceptable standards of modesty need to be maintained.

The above is not an exhaustive list, and Trust/School Leaders reserves the right to deem other items of clothing as inappropriate.

The Trust is committed to promote diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture and tradition. Staff may wear appropriate religious and cultural dress (including clerical collars, head scarves, skullcaps and turbans) unless it creates a health and safety risk to you or any other person or otherwise breaches this policy. Those wishing to wear items of religious dress should discuss the matter with the [position] on appointment to their position. The CEO has the final say in whether dress or appearance is appropriate. Priority is at all times given to health and safety requirements.

16.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

All employees must ensure that they:

- Read and understand the Health and Safety Policy;
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by WPT (where applicable);
- Comply with any hygiene requirements;
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements;
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any employee of the Trust community, staff or visitors;
- 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.

17.0

KEEPING WITHIN THE LAW

- 17.1 Employees 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:
- Uphold the law at work
 - 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:
 - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
 - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
 - Employees must inform their Headteacher/CEO immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at WPT (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher/CEO will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in WPT or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

18.0

CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK AND AT WORK RELATED FUNCTIONS

- 18.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at WPT means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.
- 18.2 Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust/School or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other employees of the Trust/School community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that the Trust becomes aware of that could impact on their role within the Trust or affect the Trust's reputation will be addressed under our Disciplinary Policy (see Disciplinary Policy).
- 18.3 The Trust expects employees to make the Trust/School aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the Trust.
- 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 the Trust reputation.



19.0 TRAINING

All WPT employees, Governors, Directors and volunteers will be trained appropriately in the procedures contained in this policy and this will be integral to the induction process.

20.0 WHISTLEBLOWING

Any employee or volunteer who becomes aware of a breach of any policy must report this immediately. Depending on the circumstances, the concern may be investigated and dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy.

21.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Trust will review this policy and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all schools.

22.0 BREACH OF POLICY

If an employee breaches this policy, or any of the policies referred to in this policy, then this may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

This policy links with our policies on:

- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- IT Acceptable Use
- Positive Handling
- Harassment/Bullying Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety