

# ORCHARD ACADEMY TRUST



## Code of Conduct

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## 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our 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 [Teachers' Standards](#). They are also based on the [7 principles of public life](#).

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for all stakeholders by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. Employees must disclose any relevant information which may impact on their job role or suitability to work with young people or in a School setting. Employees are accountable for their actions and conduct and should seek advice from their Line Manager / Headteacher if they are not sure of the appropriate action to take.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures. This Policy applies to all current Employees of Orchard Academy Trust's Schools.

This Policy should also be adhered to by all volunteers / supply and agency workers engaged by the Trust / School.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. General obligations

Orchard Academy Trust expects Employees to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. They will:

- Maintain high standards of personal presentation, attendance and punctuality (The Employer will give careful consideration to lateness and absence related to disability prior to consideration of any formal action.)
- Be mindful and sensitive to the customs, practices, culture and personal belief of others.
- Play their part in creating a fair and inclusive work environment where everyone can thrive and do their best work.
- Observe boundaries appropriate to their role and a School setting
- Ensure any topics of conversation with pupils/students are suitable to the School setting / curriculum
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat all stakeholders with dignity and respect
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

### 3.1 Responsibilities of the school

- Explain the provisions of the Code of Conduct to Employees and signpost Employees to other relevant policies, document and guidelines
- Provide additional advice and guidance to Employees in relation to queries they may have regarding the application of the Code of Conduct
- Coach, support and provide feedback to Employees on their performance in relation to the required standards of conduct
- Take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to address breaches of the expected standards of conduct.

### 3.2 Responsibilities of the Employee

- Employees are required to sign the declaration at Appendix 1 to confirm that they have read and will comply with the Code of Conduct.

## 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection policy and procedures are available on the schools' websites. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### **4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, executive headteacher or the chair of trustees where the executive headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

#### **4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and low-level concerns policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

#### **4.3 Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger

- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the executive headteacher. If the concern is about the executive headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of trustees.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## **5. Working & Staff-pupil relationships**

### **5.1 Working Relationships & Relationships with other Stakeholders / Community**

The Trust / School expects Employees to maintain positive and professional working relationships. Colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders should be treated with dignity and respect.

Employees should be polite and courteous in their interactions with parents / pupils and other stakeholders / members of the School community.

Behaviour which constitutes bullying and harassment, intimidation, victimisation, discrimination or abuse of authority will not be tolerated and may be addressed by implementing the School's bullying and harassment policy and / or the disciplinary policy. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language (for example the use of profanity, vulgar expressions) or unprofessional behaviour (for example, being rude or hostile) with colleagues, pupils and parents.

Employees should treat all stakeholders in a fair and equitable way and not behave in a manner which may demean, distress, offend or discriminate against others.

Employees should ensure that policies relating to equality issues are complied with.

Employees should be aware of the Trust's Complaint Procedure and address any concerns from parents / pupils and other stakeholders in accordance with this document.

### **5.2 Staff-Pupil relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils 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.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **6. Communication and social media**

Employees must ensure that their online presence / profile is compatible with their professional role. Employees are entitled to their private life, but should be mindful that their online presence can be subject to public scrutiny. It is important that the wider community are confident that pupils are being educated by professionally responsible people.

All Employees should refrain from sharing confidential / privileged information, discussing incidents, operational or employment matters or making critical / negative comments about the Trust / School / pupils / parents or colleagues on such forums

Staff will not browse, create, transmit, display, publish, comment on or forward any material / images which is illegal, could offend or harass or anything which could bring an Employee's professional role or the Trust / School / Local Authority into disrepute. For example, expressing controversial views related to protected characteristics such, as race, sex, disability, age or gender reassignment would be unacceptable.

Staff will not post images of work colleagues without permission.

Staff will not access or update personal social media sites using school devices / during working time.

Employees at schools can often have more complex relationships than just being a member of staff or a parent. As examples, staff can also be parents (of pupils at the school), in relationships or have friendships with other staff or parents; or also governors. Any member of staff can report any existing social media relationships to the Headteacher for their own protection. Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles or have these individuals as social media 'friends' / 'contacts'. It is also recommended that Employees do not have ex-pupils or their families as social media 'friends'.

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils or parents. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy (within the Child Protection Policy).

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## 8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Specifically, all Employees must:

- Work in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and associated legislation
- Observe the Trust's / School's procedures for the release of information to other agencies and members of the public
- Not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain
- Not speak inappropriately about the school community, pupils, parents, staff governors, or trustees including discussing incidents, operational or employment matters with parents / members of the public
- Ensure all confidential data is kept secure and where required password protected

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## 9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work.

Employees are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid acting in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.

During the course of their work Employees should ensure they do not:

- Wilfully provide false / misleading information
- Destroy or alter information / records without proper authorisation
- Wilfully withhold information or conceal matters which they could reasonably be expected to have disclosed
- Misrepresent the School / Trust or their position
- Accept or offer any form of bribe / inducement or engage in any other corrupt working practice

Should an Employee become aware of any conduct on the part of a colleague which raises concerns regarding health and safety, safeguarding or criminal activity – they have a duty to disclose this.

Concerns regarding an Employee's motivation will be carefully considered via initial fact finding before determining whether any further action may be required.

Allegations concerning fraudulent, dishonest or corrupt practices or the falsification or withholding of information may be considered by implementing the disciplinary procedure, this may result in formal disciplinary sanctions including dismissal.

Staff will not accept bribes. All gifts will be managed in accordance with the Trust Gifts and Hospitality policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

- Suitable protective equipment must be worn where provided and appropriate.
- Employees should wear their identity badges at all times whilst in the workplace.
- Employees should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Employees should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.
- An Employee may be asked to cover a visible tattoo where it is deemed inappropriate / offensive for a school setting. For example if the subject is discriminatory, violent or contentious. Body piercings, except earrings, should not be exposed.

These requirements only apply whilst the Employee is in the workplace or carrying out work on behalf of the School.

The School recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its Employees and will take a sensitive approach where this affects dress and uniform requirements.

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

### **11.1 Secondary Employment**

Employees should ensure that any external paid or unpaid work does not conflict with their duty to the Trust / School, or pose a potential to damage the Employee's own or the educational settings reputation with the context of their job role and seniority.

Employees must discuss with their Headteacher and obtain their consent before taking up additional paid / unpaid employment or engaging in any other business.

Requests will not be unreasonably refused providing that:

- It does not affect or is unlikely to affect the suitability of the Employee to undertake their job role or work with children/young people or in a School setting
- There is no detrimental impact on an Employee's work performance or their own or others health and safety.
- Privileged or confidential information is not shared
- Work is undertaken outside of the School and of contracted hours of work
- The activity is not in direct competition with those of the School

It is an Employee's responsibility to monitor the hours they work and ensure they are rested and refreshed to be able to carry out their role. An average working week of 48 hours across all employments should not normally be exceeded unless the Employee has elected to opt out of the Working Time Regulations.

## 12. Equality and Diversity

We seek to achieve an environment in which all are included and in which discrimination is not tolerated. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of sex, gender reassignment, race (which covers colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partner status or age. Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity and establish a culture where diversity is valued.

You should always:

- observe our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

### **Anti-Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation**

We are committed to ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others with dignity and respect, free from bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, and victimisation. Staff should always consider whether their words or conduct could be offensive. Even unintentional harassment or bullying is unacceptable. We will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation.

We take allegations of harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying and victimisation very seriously and will address them promptly and confidentially wherever possible. Harassment, bullying or victimisation by a member of staff will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. In some cases, it may amount to gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

You should always observe our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy and in doing so, ensure:

- Bad and/or offensive language or gestures of any nature is not used in the workplace, whether directed at a particular person or not;
- You do not share or view inappropriate images or other content;
- You think before making a joke in the workplace – could anyone be upset or offended by what you say?;
- You don't invade colleagues' personal space;
- You do not exclude colleagues unfairly from discussions or events;
- You do not use crude humour;
- You do not use an aggressive tone or aggressive language when speaking with colleagues;
- You are not physically aggressive towards colleagues;
- You do not make sexually suggestive comments;
- You do not mock, mimic or belittle colleagues in relation to any protected characteristic or otherwise;
- You do not gossip about your colleagues.

If you think you or another person may have been harassed, bullied or victimised, you should raise this in accordance with our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

## 13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Our Trustees will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## 14. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Health and Safety
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Communications
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- Anti Harassment and Bullying

## Appendix 1: Code of Conduct – Confirmation of Compliance

Please sign the declaration below and return this to the school office.

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

Should I have any queries about any aspect of the code or am unclear of the school's expectations I will discuss these with the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.

Name:

Job Title:

Signed:

Date:

***(It is suggested that Employees should re- read this policy on an annual basis to ensure they are familiar with any changes which have been made)***