



St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

MAT Staff Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

This code of conduct has been adopted by the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust Board to enable it to discharge its duty to establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct of school and central team staff members.

This code of conduct applies to all employees, in both Trust schools and the central team. All schools are entitled to demand a high standard of conduct from employees.

School staff members are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils and parents in the school community. Staff members act as role models to the children and are viewed as representatives of the school for parents and in the wider community. As such, all staff members are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and professionally.

As an employee, you must not put yourself in a position where duty and private interests' conflict and you must not make use of your employment to further your private interests.

2. Aims, scope and principles

This Code of Conduct aims to establish the standard of conduct expected of all Trust employees; its principles reflect the Trust's core values and Christian ethos. By implementing this code, we aim to ensure the Trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The Nolan Principles, identifying the seven principles and ethical standards for public servants, form a key part of this Code of Conduct:

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity** – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty** – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

For teachers, this Code of Conduct applies in conjunction with the Teachers' Standards (in which the Nolan Principles are embedded). The Teachers' Standards cover: '...the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.' Many of the principles in this Code of Conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#) and we expect all support staff, central Trust staff, and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We expect all staff to respect the vision and values of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan MAT and to interact in a way which reflects those Christian values.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, the school and its pupils.

3. Legislation and guidance

This Code of Conduct has been developed to meet the statutory safeguarding requirement in Keeping Children Safe in Education for school to have a code of conduct covering 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.

General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Never talk to pupils in an inappropriate manner
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- 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

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.

All school staff are expected to be familiar with the school's Safeguarding, Whistleblowing and related policies and the procedures set out in them. Central staff visiting schools will familiarise themselves procedures of the school they are working in. All staff must be aware that the duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and PREVENT Lead** and must ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are available in the policies sections of our Trust schools' websites. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

All staff are required to inform the school/Trust, as their employer, of any circumstance relevant to their employment in a position of trust, such as police action in relation to their conduct upon and during the course of their employment. Nothing in this policy limits an employee's statutory obligation arising from safeguarding legislation, including their responsibilities as a person in a position of trust.

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, but is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Managing Allegations of abuse against staff policy and procedure. This is available in the policies section of the MAT website- <http://cofesuffolkmat.org/policies>.

5. Confidentiality

In school, staff members will see and hear private and confidential information about pupils, parents and colleagues. It is essential that staff members respect the privacy of these individuals and do not share information with anyone outside the school except a pupil's parents or other professionals who have a genuine, lawful need to know.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a senior member of staff.

6. Personal Interest

Staff must not in their official capacity:

- Allow personal interest to conflict with the school's requirements;
- Use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Staff must:

- Not disclose information given to them in confidence, or information acquired which is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorized to give it
- Not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- Ensure that relationships with pupils, parents, Governors, staff members and any other people with whom you may come into contact in the course of your duties are professional at all times.

7. Positive and Professional relationships

Relationships with Pupils and Families

Staff members have a crucial role to play in the shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with pupils in ways that are affirming and inspiring. Staff members should foster positive relationships with pupils and parents while being mindful of the need to maintain professional distance and observing proper boundaries 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.

For example, it is important to:

- Remain calm in challenging situations
- Speak in a respectful manner
- Judge pupils on their behavior in the current situation and not on previous misbehaviors or preconceptions
- Give pupils the time to express themselves clearly
- Be sensitive to the particular needs and backgrounds of individual pupils and families
- Approach tasks and change positively
- Show tolerance of all groups
- Be mindful of how we discuss pupils amongst ourselves; maintain a positive, respectful standpoint.

Above all, the conduct of staff members should demonstrate that they care for the wellbeing of pupils and their families, reflecting the school's Christian ethos.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a 1-to-1 basis, staff will make sure that:

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

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.

Relationships with other staff members

Staff members must also be professional in the way they interact with one another. The National Education Union (NEU) has published a Code of Professional Ethics, which includes the following relevant points:

- All teachers should observe confidentiality in respect of any discussions with other individual teachers about their professional problems and difficulties.
- If a teacher experiences any concern or dissatisfaction in relation to a colleague's conduct or standard of work the teacher should discuss the issue informally and in confidence with the colleague concerned. Where the issue is not resolved informally the teacher should take no further action without informing the colleague. **Should the teacher have reason to believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or to individual pupils then there is a clear duty to make a report to the Headteacher.**
- Teachers should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of third parties; nor should a teacher adversely criticise a colleague in the presence of others, save in the context of appropriate procedures.
- Effective consultation between teachers takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect for the professional expertise and a recognition and understanding of the various responsibilities, of those involved. Teachers should be able to express freely their considered professional opinions while recognising the responsibilities borne by colleagues.'

While the NEU relates these points specifically to the conduct of teachers, this is a model of good practice to be adhered to by all staff members at the school.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying behaviour, including sexual harassment, towards other staff member is unacceptable and will be addressed under the Trust's Harassment and Bullying Policy. The Trust will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

Considerations for staff members with children in the school

Where the child of a staff member attends the school in which they are working, the member of staff must be particularly aware of when they are dealing with colleagues in their professional capacity and when they are acting as a parent, being careful to separate the two. Particular considerations are:

- Discussion of their child's performance or wellbeing at school must only take place at pre-arranged parent – teacher meetings
- Child and parent must always be in separate groups on school trips
- Staff member to ensure they do not give preferential treatment to their child when in school

- Information must not be shared with their child before it is made available to the whole parent or pupil population, e.g., upcoming school events
- Where the child is in school outside school hours, they must always be appropriately supervised, either with their parent in the classroom, or booked into a breakfast/after school club if the parent is needed for a professional and private conversation, e.g., attending a staff meeting, conferring with a colleague or meeting another parent, where the child's presence might compromise their professional integrity.

8. Personal relationships at work

Employees must not allow personal relationship with a colleague or pupil influence their conduct at work. Employees are expected to declare any personal relationship at work where there is a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest or misuse of authority arising from the relationship which may fall under this code.

The Trust does not take a prohibitive approach to personal relationships at work as it is recognised that these are inevitable in any workplace. However, this code seeks to ensure that such relationships are declared and are transparent and do not give rise to a more or less favorable treatment.

Definitions of personal relationships

In order to promote a safe and positive work environment, careful consideration must be given to personal relationships at work.

Examples of personal relationships may include, but are not limited to:

- A family relationship; e.g. brother, sister, daughter, son, mother, father, but are not limited to; marriage or civil partnership, or co-habiting partners.
- A business/commercial/financial relationship
- A very close friendship or social relationship that exist outside of work
- A romantic/intimate relationship

A personal relationship can be with an existing or prospective employee, volunteer, contractor, supplier or governors but is not restricted to these examples.

School/Trust approach to personal relationships at work

Where employees with a personal relationship work closely in the same school or other parts of the Trust, the potential for conflict between personal/family loyalty and work responsibilities may arise.

In the UK there are no specific laws governing personal relationships at work. However, legislation relevant to personal relationships in the workplace includes:

- The Equalities Act 2010
- Protection of Harassment Act 1997
- The Human Rights Act 1998, article 8

Workplace relationships have the potential to be detrimental to the operation and the reputation of the organisation. For example, it could cause issues relating to:

- A conflict of interest (influencing for actual or potential perceived personal benefit)
- Subjective or unfair recruitment decisions
- Preferential or inconsistent treatment of pupils or employees
- Breaches of confidentiality between employees in the relationship or employees and pupils
- Inappropriate or unprofessional behaviours
- Positional power based on one person position in school affecting decisions
- Bullying and harassment

Despite these potential challenges, it is recognized that relationships in the workplace will not necessarily have any negative impact on the organisation's operation or reputation. However,

individuals must recognise that there will be circumstances where they will need to withdraw from certain decisions or from undertaking certain roles, in order to protect themselves and the organisation from any possible criticism of unfair bias.

9. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. For further information, refer to the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust Whistleblowing Policy. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leaders and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. All adults working in education settings should know the name of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and follow the Safeguarding Policy and procedures, as necessary. All staff members have a duty to report any child protection concerns.

All staff are encouraged to report suspected wrong doing as soon as possible, their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

10. Communication and social media

When using social media and networking sites, staff members should be mindful of privacy settings and the potential overlap between their personal and professional roles. Staff are advised, as a matter of good practice to consider how publicly identifiable they are online and to use privacy controls appropriately, including setting public profiles to private.

If a staff member has a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name but consider using an alternative such as first and middle name to avoid being identified. Staff members must not post any comments, photographs, images, or conversations on social networking websites which may bring themselves or the school/Trust into disrepute. Staff members must not become 'friends' with pupils on social networking sites and must exercise extreme caution in their online relationships with parents. Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing personal information.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents/carers via social media, or any other means outside of the school/Trust, in order to develop any sort of relationship. The only exception being where a member of staff has a child or other close family member in their school.

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

Staff should be aware of the school/Trust's online safety policy and acceptable use agreement.

11. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology belonging to the school/Trust, or personal technology when on a school/Trust site 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/Trust equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. Any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks and must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code.

Staff will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils unless given permission by a member of SLT for a specific occasion and on condition these are uploaded to school systems and deleted from the personal device at the first opportunity (see also the school's Mobile Phone Policy)

Staff members **must** only use memory sticks that are encrypted and supplied by the school.

Staff members **must** only use password-protected laptops supplied by the school for school work off-site.

Staff members **must** not leave school laptops in cars overnight.

School email **must** only be used for work purposes. Emails containing sensitive information **must not** include pupils' full names. Sensitive documents sent via email to external agencies **must** be password protected (passwords should be sent in separate emails).

The Trust reserves the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school/Trust IT system.

Staff will only use AI tools, including chatbots, in line with the guidelines set out by the Trust.

12. Educational Visits and Transport

The Trust adheres to the Local Authority guidance in relation to educational visits. Staff members are required to undertake thorough risk assessments, using the LA online 'Evolve' System (need to check this) which must be approved by senior leaders prior to the trip.

Occasionally, staff members will transport pupils in private vehicles. For example, to after school sports events. Wherever possible, this should be avoided by providing alternative arrangements. Except in the most exceptional circumstances, an additional adult should be present in the vehicle. If unavoidable, Staff members should ensure that they are alone with a pupil for the minimum possible time. On such occasions, the staff member is responsible for the welfare of pupils until they are safely passed over to a parent or carer.

13. Absence and Punctuality

School/Trust staff should make their school/team aware of any planned absences at the earliest possible opportunity so that cover can be arranged where needed. Any unexpected absences must be reported to their Headteacher/Senior Leader or line manager, in line with local procedures, at the earliest possible opportunity. Text messages are not usually sufficient. In schools, if staff members are unable to contact the Headteacher, another senior leader must be contacted.

For further information, refer to the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust Sickness Absence Policy. It is helpful if staff members who are absent due to illness can contact the school office before the end of the school day to give an update on their condition and advise whether they are likely to be in school the following day.

If employees are unwell or on medication, they must seek the guidance of a health professional to ensure they are fit for work.

Staff members are expected to be punctual, arriving in good time to begin their contracted hours punctually. If staff members are delayed, they must contact the school office or a senior leader.

14. Honesty and integrity, including gifts and hospitality

The Trust seeks to maintain the highest standards of conduct and probity in its business. The acceptance of gifts and/or hospitality by employees must be treated with extreme caution. Staff members must ensure they comply with the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Policy:

<http://cofesuffolkmat.org/policies>.

Staff will not accept bribes.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school/Trust 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/Trust, the member of staff will advise the school/Trust 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.

15.Smoking, vaping and drug use

The Trust is a non-smoking and non-vaping organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or vape in any Trust school or other building or grounds, at any time. Smoking or vaping whilst on the Trust/school's premises may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff must not possess, consume, sell, or be under the influence of illegal or non-prescribed drugs while at work, on duty, or on Trust premises

16.Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that, where possible, any tattoos which may give offence are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

17.Conduct outside of work

Staff members must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school/Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school/Trust community. Criminal offences that involve violence or possession, or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable. Staff members are expected to disclose all criminal charges and convictions, including cautions. Failure to disclose would constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Staff members must ensure that the use of alcohol outside work does not adversely affect work performance and does not affect the safety and welfare of themselves or others. Staff members should be considerate of the impact of their behaviour on the image and reputation of the school.

Any consideration of conduct outside of work will take into account of whether there is a clear and demonstrable link to the employee's role, responsibilities, or the reputation and proper functioning of the school. Action will only be taken where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

18.Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by MAT Board of Trustees.

Our local governing body 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.

19.Links with policies

This code links with other Trust policies, including:

- Child protection and safeguarding
- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. This also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety and acceptable use
- Harassment and Bullying
- Whistle-blowing
- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff policy and procedure.

All of these may be found on our MAT website-<http://cofesuffolkmat.org/policies>.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____--