

# *Standards of Conduct for Staff*

## *Lower Park School*



*Reference to:*

*The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*

*The Freedom of Information Act 2000*

*The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)*

*The School Standards and Framework Act 1998*

*The Local Government and Housing Act 1989*

*Local Government Act 1972, section 117*

Next Review Spring 2024

## **1.0 SCOPE**

This code of conduct is recommended to all Community and Voluntary Controlled, Voluntary Aided, Foundation schools, who buy back the Education HR Consultancy Package through ChESS.

## **2.0 AIMS**

- 2.1 To give clear guidance to employees to ensure that they are fully aware of the standards of conduct and behaviour required of them both inside work and, where applicable, in their personal life.
- 2.2 To ensure that all employees are aware of the standards required of them and the procedures which may be applied where there are concerns.
- 2.3 Where employees are required to follow specific job related or professional standards within their job role, this Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with those standards.

## **3.0 PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The responsibility for complying with this code lies with employees, who are encouraged to seek advice if they are in any doubt about the interpretation or impact of any aspect of the code.
- 3.2 All employees have a responsibility to act and to take decisions based on public interest and should act with honesty, integrity, objectivity and impartiality at all times. They must always act in accordance with the trust that the community and everyone within it is entitled to place on them and be open about, and take accountability for, their actions and decisions.
- 3.3 Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community that they serve and ensure courteous and efficient service delivery at all times. Everyone has a right to be treated with fairness and equity and all employees must ensure that they always comply with the School's policies, and the law, relating to equality and discrimination.
- 3.4 Employees also need to take care that their behaviour outside the workplace does not conflict with their work responsibilities and will not bring the School into disrepute

## **4.0 COMPLIANCE**

- 4.1 It is vital that all employees are exemplary in their conduct at work and non-compliance with this code will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

4.2 Employees who believe that other employees may be breaching this Code of Conduct have a duty to report this, in confidence, to the Head Teacher and/ or line manager who will investigate the situation and, where necessary, take appropriate action. Employees who report a potential breach of the code will not be penalised or discriminated against for having done so. Please access the following link: [WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY](#)

## **5.0 CONTENT**

This Code of Conduct details the standards of conduct that the School requires employees to follow in a range of areas and circumstances, as listed below:

- Setting an Example
- Safeguarding Pupils/Students
- Pupil/Student Development
- Recruitment
- Working Relationships
- Personal Relationships
- Conduct outside Work
- Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship
- Tendering and Contracts
- Use of School Identity, Facilities and External Activities
- Confidential/Disclosure of Information

Where appropriate, this policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant School policies and codes of practice e.g. The ICT Code of Practice and the Social Networking guidelines.

This policy is not intended to cover day to day work conduct, performance or attendance issues which are covered by the relevant employment policies. Details of these policies can be obtained from the school office.

## **6 SETTING AN EXAMPLE**

- 6.1 All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 6.2 All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- 6.3 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- 6.4 This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

## **7 SAFEGUARDING PUPILS/STUDENTS**

- 7.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:
  - physical abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - neglect
- 7.2 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection.
- 7.3 The school's DSL is Amelia Lomas  
The school's Deputy DSL is Emma Cunha
- 7.4 Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Safeguarding Policy and staff must be familiar with these documents. Copies of these are available from the school office, the staffroom noticeboard and the school's website.
- 7.5 Staff must not demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- 7.6 Staff must take the upmost care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- 7.7 Staff have a duty to report any Safeguarding concerns relating to a colleague behaving in a way that may cause harm to a child to the Safeguarding Lead. This would include developing an inappropriate relationship with a child outside the school environment. All colleagues reporting concerns, as well as those whom the concerns are about, will receive the necessary support."
- 7.8 Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers.

- 7.9 Staff who are in contact with pupils/stude should not use their mobile phones in school during their contact time with pupils. Mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.

## **8 PUPIL DEVELOPMENT**

- 8.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils.
- 8.2 Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.
- 8.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

## **9.0 RECRUITMENT**

- 9.1 Employees who are involved in the recruitment and selection process should follow the School's policies on recruitment and selection and should ensure that all appointments are made on merit. It is unlawful for an appointment which is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the job required.
- 9.2 Recruitment and Selection processes place a wide range of employees in a position where they may be able to influence decisions. Employees involved in the process must be specifically trained to ensure that candidates are selected on their ability to do the job required.
- 9.3 Employees should not be involved in any appointment where they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with any of the applicants. This also includes providing a reference.

## **9.0 WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

- 9.1 All employees are expected to maintain professional working relationships with all individuals and groups of individuals that they have dealings with in the course of their work. They should always dress in a manner that reflects their job role and working environment and behave in a professional manner at all times and should not allow work and personal interests to conflict.

## **10.0 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- 10.1 It is acknowledged that employees who work together may form close personal friendships and, in some cases, romantic relationships. Whilst the School would not generally wish to interfere with such friendships and relationships, there would be cause for concern, and/or action to be taken, if potential or actual difficulties and problems at work were to arise from such relationships. Similar concerns could also arise where family members work closely together.
- 10.2 All employees have an obligation to the School not to compromise standards of behaviour, conduct or performance through personal or family relationships. They

are expected to act responsibly and to ensure that such relationships do not influence or prejudice the conduct of School business, bring the School into disrepute, or cause offence and embarrassment to other colleagues. Additionally, employees must never be involved in recruitment, disciplinary action or other employment matters relating to someone with whom they have a personal or family relationship.

- 10.3 Where employees feel that a personal or family relationship at work may lead to problems or conflict they should discuss this with the Head Teacher [or Chair of Governors in the case of a Head Teacher] so that any potential difficulties can be resolved. Similarly where a Head Teacher [or Chair of Governors in the case of a Head Teacher] has cause for concern about relationships within the School, they should discuss this with the employees concerned to seek to resolve any issues that might occur. Where it is felt that a relationship at work is causing, or is likely to cause, real difficulties, advice should be sought from Education HR.
- 10.4 Applicants for posts within the School are asked to disclose any personal or family relationships with existing School employees or members of the Governing Board so that it can be discussed with them during the selection process. Failure to do so could disqualify the applicant. Unless, there are exceptional circumstances, such relationships should not generally affect the decision to appoint or not appoint the applicant but will allow for appropriate arrangements to be made, where necessary, to reduce the possibility of problems arising from the relationship. Please access the following link: [DECLARATION OF AN INTEREST OR CONNECTION FORM](#)

## **11.0 CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK**

- 11.1 All employees should ensure the way they conduct themselves outside of work does not impact on the reputation of the school. In addition, if you were to receive a conviction, caution or childcare protection order then you should make the Headteacher aware immediately.

## **12.0 EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES OR EMPLOYMENT**

- 12.1 It is recognised that employees may wish to undertake various activities outside work. However, employees should not take on any type of external private work or activity which conflicts with the School's interests or which prevents them from doing their normal job properly or from fulfilling the terms of their contract of employment. They must also ensure that they understand and can comply with both Working Time and Health and Safety Regulations before undertaking external private work or activities.
- 12.2 All employees are required to complete an annual declaration of interest return, even if this is to confirm that they have nothing to declare, and to then report issues as and when they occur.

On this basis employees must not:

- i) Undertake private work or activities during their normal working hours

- ii) Use School premises, property or facilities for private work or activities.
- iii) Undertake any private work which prevents them from carrying out the full range of their normal duties, including contractual overtime.
- iv) Undertake any private work or activities which could involve or bring about a conflict of interest with their normal job. Please access the following link: [REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FOR OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT FORM](#)

### **13 GIFTS, HOSPITALITY AND SPONSORSHIP**

- 13.1 Employees need to be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to corruptly receive any gift, hospitality, sponsorship or other reward or advantage for doing or not doing anything or showing favour or disfavour to any person in their official capacity. If an allegation is made, it will be up to the employee to demonstrate that they have followed the School's Code of Conduct and that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.
- 13.2 All employees are required to complete an annual declaration of interest return, even if this is to confirm that they have nothing to declare, and to then report issues as and when they occur.

#### **Gifts**

- 13.3 Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from people or organisations, e.g. contractors or suppliers, who are or may be dealing with the School as to do so could render the School and the employee open to criticism or, in serious cases, to criminal charges of corruption.
- Small insignificant gifts of a value of less than £5, such as pens, diaries, calendars, mouse-mats or mugs may be accepted. Where an employee is offered a personal gift that could be regarded as significant, they should politely decline the gift and use the appropriate Declaration Form to report the circumstances to the Head Teacher [or Chair of Governors in the case of a Head Teacher].

#### **Hospitality**

- 13.4 Employees should think very carefully before accepting any offer of hospitality and must take the following points into account:
- i) whether the scale of the hospitality is appropriate to the circumstances. For example, the offer of light refreshments or a sandwich lunch at a meeting will generally be acceptable whilst an invitation to an expensive restaurant for a three course meal is unlikely to be acceptable.
  - ii) whether the invitation is a corporate one or a personal one

- iii) if corporate, whether attendance at the meeting or event where the hospitality is offered genuinely falls within the employee's job role and has been agreed by the Head Teacher
- iv) whether acceptance of the hospitality could result in suggestions of improper influence.

Where, having considered the above points, an employee is concerned about hospitality being offered to them, they should use the appropriate Declaration Form to seek authorisation from the Head Teacher. Please access the following link: [REPORTING OF OFFERS OF GIFTS OR HOSPITALITY FORM](#)

## **Sponsorship**

- 13.5 If an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the rules detailed above about accepting gifts and hospitality will apply.

If the School chooses to sponsor an event or service, no employee or anyone connected with them may benefit from the sponsorship. Similarly, if the School wishes to give financial support in the Community any employee who is involved in this should ensure that any advice they give is impartial and that they do not have any conflict of interests. Where applicable the employee will be required to complete a Declaration and Reporting Form.

## **14 TENDERING AND CONTRACTING**

- 14.1 All orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition between tenders. No special favours should be shown to current or former employees or to relatives, associates or friends, when contracts are being awarded. Where an employee feels that there may be a conflict of interest in the work they are doing because of some link or relationship with potential or actual tenderers, they should declare this on the Declaration and Reporting Form.

## **15. USE OF SCHOOL IDENTITY, PROPERTY AND FACILITIES**

### **Use of School Identity**

- 15.1 Where employees are using social networking/external internet sites in their personal life, they must ensure that they comply with the School's Social Networking Policies, taking care to maintain the reputation and confidentiality of the School at all times.
- 15.2 School letter-headed paper must only be used for official correspondence and employees must never use this type of paper for personal correspondence.
- 15.3 Employees who are asked to give a personal reference for a work colleague must make it clear that the reference is being given on a personal basis and that the



opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the School. As above, letter-headed paper must not be used in these circumstances.

## **Use of School Property and Facilities**

- 15.4 All employees are responsible for the safe keeping and proper care of any School property or equipment that they use in the course of their work. Any deliberate or negligent failure to take proper care will be viewed as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action.
- 15.5 At work employees will have access to a range of School property and facilities including office equipment, computers, stores, transport and other machinery. These are provided to support employees in carrying out their work and should not generally be used for personal purposes.
- 15.6 However, some light personal use is permitted by the School in the following circumstances:
- Fax machines and photocopiers – if necessary, personal fax messages may be dispatched to locations within United Kingdom. Photocopies of personal documents (up to a maximum of 10 copies at one time) may be taken, with costs being reimbursed to the School.
  - Computer Internet access and e-mails - employees are expected to adhere to the guidance given in the School's ICT Code of Practice.
- 15.7 All employees need to be aware that it is against School policy to forward or respond to chain e-mails.

## **16. CONFIDENTIALITY/DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

### **16.1 Data Protection**

Employees must follow the School's Policies on Confidentiality at all times and should be fully aware of the provisions of the Data Protection Act in relation to any information that they receive, hold, or use whether manually or electronically.

In addition, employees must not:

- i) Disclose or use confidential work related information for personal gain or benefit or pass it on to others who do not have clearance to receive the information or who might use it in an inappropriate way.
- ii) Give information to the media, or other third party, unless authorised to do so.

- iii) Prevent another person from gaining access to information that they are lawfully entitled to.
- iv) Disclose confidential or personal information about someone else, unless the request is from an approved source such as HMRC or the Department of Social Security or, where the subject has authorised it, from a bank or building society.
- v) Disclose sensitive personal information about an employee when providing a reference for that person, unless they have given their agreement.

Where an employee is in any doubt, they should always seek guidance from their line manager or, if appropriate, from the School's Data Protection Officer.

## **16.2 Media Relations**

All employees should familiarise themselves with the School's Media Relations Protocol which states clearly that employees should not communicate externally or disclose any information to the press or other media about the School, which is not already in the public domain.

If an employee receives an enquiry from the media they should not make any initial comment or response and must immediately direct the enquiry to the headteacher, who will either respond to the enquiry or work with the employee to ensure that the information given out is accurate and timely.

Any unauthorised comment made to the media on behalf of the School that is potentially harmful to its reputation may result in disciplinary action.

## **17. EQUALITY**

The school will ensure that, when implementing this Code of Conduct, no employee will be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender or transgender, marital status or civil partnership, racial group, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity. This means that the Code may need to be adjusted to cater for the specific needs of an individual including the provision of information in alternative formats where necessary.

## **18. MONITORING**

Data relating to this Code of Conduct will be collated and monitored regularly by the Governing Board to ensure that the Policy is operating fairly, consistently and effectively. Issues that are identified from the data will be dealt with appropriately.

## **19. REVIEW**

The code will be reviewed in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.

Prepared by: Education HR November 2018

Reviewed: May 2023

Signed: Clara Kenyon (Chair of Governors)