

Employee Code of Conduct

Create Learning Trust



Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of Review
Business, Risk and Audit Committee	08 March 2024	Annually	March 2024

Introduction

The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of Create Learning Trust and its employees. The conduct of all employees must therefore be of the highest standard. This Code of Conduct has been prepared to help employees on issues of conduct by providing a framework of guidelines. This Code of Conduct must be read and signed by all school and Trust employees on an annual basis.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, which covers 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 the Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

General Obligations

Adults working within Create Learning Trust must all act with utmost good faith with regard to the business of the school and Trust and do all in their power to promote the school's and Trust's interests and not do anything which may adversely affect the school's or Trust's reputation.

All school and Trust employees have an influential position in the school and act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. All employees must

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- 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

In accordance with the Trust Equality Policy, employees must ensure that they do not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics. They must also ensure that in their dealings with the local community, all members of the public are treated with respect and fairness.

Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring employees or the school or Trust into disrepute will be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school or Trust, 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 or Trust on social media.

Public Duty and Private Interest

Off-duty hours are an employee's own personal concern. It is important, however, that people do not put themselves in a position where their duty to the school and their private interests' conflict.

Employees are expected to abide by the policies of the school or Trust. They must take care to ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or their duty to carry out those policies.

Any staff activity involving pupils and parents, such as tutoring, must be declared and agreed with the Headteacher prior to engagement.

Confidentiality and Information Disclosure

Employees working within Create Learning Trust must conform to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy, or disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions. This includes information relating to school or Trust business and pupil data.

Employees must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff or pupil to any unauthorised person, external organisation, or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of the Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer or Director of Operations.

Employees must not use information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the school or Trust or for personal gain or benefit; nor should they impart this information to others who might use it in such a way.

Confidential information belonging to the school or Trust must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.

Staff Dress Code

To dress professionally shows pride, effort, respect for oneself and one's profession. Adults in school are role models for learners in the school; therefore, they have a responsibility to model appropriate dress and appearance. The image that we project as professionals is associated with how we present ourselves; the image of the school and Trust in the community is related to how all adults in the school dress. It is therefore important to dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity. Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Create Learning Trust is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

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

All staff have a duty of care to report **low level concerns** to the school or Trust. A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that: is inconsistent with this staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for the school to refer to the local authority. 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.

All staff have a duty of care to **report allegations that may meet the harm threshold**. For example, anyone working in the school or Trust 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

The school and Trust 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.

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.

Communication and social media

School employee's social media profiles should not be available to pupils and families. If a staff member has a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils and families may be able to find them.

Employees 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. Staff should not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Employees 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.

Acceptable use of technology

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.

Employees 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.

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

Honesty and integrity

Employees 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 will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than [£50] must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. Employees must not seek or receive preferential rates by virtue of your dealings on behalf of the school or Trust. Offers of hospitality, including visits to exhibitions, business meals, social functions, etc. should only be accepted if there is a genuine need to represent the school or Trust in an official capacity.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school and 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 and Trust, employees must 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.

Confidentiality

Employees 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

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 the child protection and safeguarding policy.

Disciplinary Action

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be the subject of disciplinary action which could result in actions up to and including dismissal.

Further information

This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert employees to some of the matters about which queries are received. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense, and good conduct.

If employees are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take in any situation they must contact the Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer or Director of Operations for advice.

This policy links with our school and Trust policies:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality

- Online safety
- Whistleblowing

Staff Code of Conduct

I confirm that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for Create Learning Trust and agree to abide by its contents.

Print Name:

Signed:

Date: