



Wessex  
Learning Trust

*We Learn Together!*

# Code of Conduct for Employees

## **Wessex Learning Trust**

### **Code of Conduct for Employees**

---

#### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the expected standards of conduct expected to all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with the Wessex Learning Trust Grievance and Disputes Procedure, the Teachers' Standards and each Academy's Staff Handbook.
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees what expectations the Wessex Learning Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should in the first instance speak to their Line Manager.
- 1.3 The Code does not form part of any employees' Contract of Employment and it may be amended at any time. If amended, this will be communicated to the employee.

#### **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service, including those in their probationary period. It also applies to Agency workers and self-employed contractors; although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Wessex Learning Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment (see disciplinary rules).

#### **3.0 Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children**

- 3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.2 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.
- 3.3 To do this employees must have fully read and understood the Wessex Learning Trust Child Protection Safeguarding Policy, the Keeping Children Safe in Education Information September 2016, and be aware of systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.
- 3.4 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external Agencies where necessary.

## **4.0 Duty of Care**

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
- Always act, and be seen to act, in pupils' best interests;
- Avoid any conduct which may lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions;
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

## **5.0 Health and Safety**

All employees must ensure that they:

- Read and understand the Wessex Learning Trust Health and Safety Policy and procedures;
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations, Educational Trips and Visits Policy and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied by the Academy;
- Comply with any hygiene requirements;
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements;
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Academy community 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.

## **6.0 Honesty and Personal Integrity**

- 6.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at the Wessex Learning Trust.
- 6.2 Employees uphold public trust in the Academy and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school by:
- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position;
  - Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions;
  - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
  - Not undermining fundamental British values, as defined by OFSTED, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We believe that to hold such values one does not have to be a British citizen;
  - Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 6.3 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Wessex Learning Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 6.4 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Wessex Learning Trust property and facilities.

## **7.0 Tackling Discrimination**

- 7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that pupils and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood their

Academy's Equality and Diversity Policy, Behaviour Policy, which include the Anti-Bullying and the Wessex Learning Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

- 7.2 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.

## **8.0 Professional Boundaries and Relationships**

- 8.1 Employees of the Wessex Learning Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our pupils which means that the relationship between an employee and a pupil is not one of equals.
- 8.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which may be misinterpreted by others. This includes any types of communication that they may have with pupils.
- 8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any pupil or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils. Employees must not discuss a pupil's sexual relationship in inappropriate settings or context. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any pupil is unacceptable and illegal.
- 8.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any pupil and should not allow pupils to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Pupils are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.
- 8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 8.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the Wessex Learning Trust we expect that they identify this to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

## **9.0 Confidentiality and Protection of Data**

- 9.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, colleagues or other matters relating to the Wessex Learning Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a pupil's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.
- 9.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or cannot be disclosed they should speak to their Academy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 9.3 Each Academy holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the Wessex Learning Trust's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromising or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Headteacher or Designated Child Protection Lead.

- 9.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all policies that relate to data, including the Use of ICT and e-Safety.
- 9.5 Members of staff should not make contact with or provide any information to the media without the prior approval of their Headteacher.

## **10.0 Physical Contact with Pupils**

- 10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the pupil's needs at the time. This should be limited and appropriate to the age, stages of development, gender and background of the pupil. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a pupil. Employees should ensure that they have read and understood their Academy's Physical Intervention Policy.
- 10.2 There may be occasions where a pupil is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If any employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation.
- 10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with pupils to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 10.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with pupils is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **11.0 Social Contact with Pupils**

- 11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels including social media, with pupils for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with pupils. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any pupil then they should report this to their Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 11.2 The Wessex Learning Trust's advice to staff is not to connect to pupils via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.
- 11.3 Each Academy is part of a local community and recognises that, as members of the community, employees will come in contact with pupils outside their Academy. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead a contact that they have had with a pupil, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.
- 11.4 Employees should read and understand the Wessex Learning Trust Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and their Academy Staff Handbook.

## **12.0 Working One to One with Pupils**

12.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a pupil and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas of their Academy;
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room;
- Report to their Line Manager if the pupil becomes distressed or angry.

### **13.0 Dress and Appearance**

13.1 Working in the Wessex Learning Trust employees are role models to our pupils and how they present themselves is important. Staff are required to comply with their Academy's dress code. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed.

### **14.0 Gifts and Hospitality**

14.1 For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for an Academy that exceeds a nominal value of £15.00 must be declared to the Headteacher 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. In the case of a Headteacher approval should be sought from the Local Governing Body.

14.2 It is traditional for pupils and their parents or carers to give occasional gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop the practice. Staff may accept gifts from pupils and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value of greater than £15.00 should inform their Headteacher who will then decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make the Headteacher aware of any pupil who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any pupil or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

14.3 Staff should not give gifts to pupils unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with academy practice or has been approved by the Academy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **15.0 Keeping within the Law**

15.1 Staff 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.

15.2 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 Academy, 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.

Write and tell the Headteacher or Chair of the Local Governing Body immediately if they are questioned by the Police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Academy (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or Chair of the Local Governing Body will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the academy or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

### **16.0 Conduct Outside of Work**

16.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at an Academy in the Wessex Learning Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

16.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Wessex Learning Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the Wessex Learning Trust or affect the Trust's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.

16.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside their Academy.

### **17.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Wessex Learning Trust Executive Group are responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Wessex Learning Trust Board as part of its commitment to safeguarding children.

Approved by the Wessex Learning Trust Board: 8/11/16  
Review date: November 2017