

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY

A Community where we live, learn and laugh together in God's Love



Code of Conduct for Staff

1. INTRODUCTION & AIMS

As a Catholic school we expect all the adults working in our school to behave in the way Christ has taught us. This means that we treat all colleagues with care, sensitivity, respect, politeness and professionalism.

By doing this, we will be modelling the teachings of Christ and modelling good, positive behaviours for the children we teach.

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is aimed at ensuring that all staff are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them by the Headteacher and Governing Body.
- 1.2 Policy aims are as follows:
 - To set protocols for acceptable conduct and behaviour at work;
 - To set protocols for how we deal with one another and communicate on a professional basis;
 - To become an organisation that is efficient and effective in its work, setting high standards for staff and pupils;
 - To work co-operatively and sensitively with Professional Associations & Trade Unions in order to create a positive environment for learning;
 - To maintain professionalism and have responsibility towards the ethos image of the school;
 - To make staff personally responsible for their own personal reputation at work and in their social lives, i.e. on social networking sites.
- 1.3 Failure to observe the standards set out in this code may be regarded as serious and any breach could render an employee liable to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary procedure.

2. STANDARDS

- 2.1 All staff are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to pupils and parents/ carers and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to parents/ carers, other organisations, councillors, governors and colleagues with impartiality.
- 2.2 Staff will be expected without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in standards/ provision of service. It is the duty of each employee to report to the appropriate Leadership team member of staff any impropriety or breach of procedure.

3. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Staff are expected to act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith at all times having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the school and the welfare of colleagues and students.
- 3.2 Staff have an obligation to comply with lawful and reasonable employer instructions and policies and to work as directed.
- 3.3 The school will provide support and appropriate professional development for colleagues who may be experiencing problems. This support will be through the line management structure and will include advice, counselling or relevant courses.

- 3.4 The Leadership Team operates an 'open door' policy and will endeavour to see colleagues regarding issues of concern as soon as possible. We will endeavour to deal with issues of difficulty through discussion and negotiation. Resolution of difficulties will be through consensus rather than compromise.
- 3.5 It is important that colleagues are supportive of one another and of school procedures. It is the intention of the Leadership Team however, to treat staff as individuals, always being mindful of the fact that personal circumstances may have an impact on the way that colleagues perform from time to time.
- 3.6 We must all be supportive of one another by meeting deadlines. It is a professional obligation for all colleagues to complete tasks by the set deadlines. It is also a professional obligation to follow agreed procedures regarding sickness absence and personal leave of absence. This enables others to continue with subsequent tasks. If colleagues predict a difficulty with meeting a deadline, they should inform their line managers in advance.
- 3.7 We should treat others in the manner in which we would wish to be treated and so be prepared to acknowledge when we have got something wrong and reflect on this to ensure it does not happen again. A professional tone when communicating with colleagues must be maintained at all times, a raised voice or any form of shouting is not considered as acceptable behaviour in which to address colleagues. Managers should be mindful of how and where they raise issues with colleagues and ensure they maintain confidentiality.
- 3.8 There should be consistency in the application of school policies that have been agreed by the governors. There is not an option to work unilaterally if policies are not agreed upon.
- 3.9 We all have a part to play in acknowledging others contributions, even when we feel that they have simply fulfilled their job and irrespective of status. Strategies to develop a better understanding of the roles of other colleagues must be considered.
- 3.10 Staff should be mindful of the implied terms of their contract. These include loyalty, trust, good conduct, obedience, care and the ability to maintain the employment relationship.
- 3.11 Inappropriate behaviour from staff will not be tolerated. If there is complaint about inappropriate behaviour or comments, intimidation or bullying this will be investigated and the appropriate disciplinary procedures may come into effect. Likewise if several members of staff raise concerns about a member of staff or a number of concerns are raised within a short time period by one or more members of staff, these will be taken seriously.
- 3.12 Representing the school at conferences/trips etc. Care should be taken at all times to maintain professional standards of behaviour and conduct to guard against bringing the school into disrepute. Staff are expected within the CES contract to conduct themselves within the ethos and teachings of the Catholic Church.

4 INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS & COLLEAGUES: SAFEGUARDING STAFF

Advice is given below on matters related to contact with individuals including pupils, staff and external parties.

4.1 General Guidelines: students, staff and external parties

- a. At all times when dealing with colleagues or pupils care should be taken to respect forms of address.

- b. If you need to carry out a formal meeting with any individual (including pupils), ensure that there is a good distance between you and the individual involved.
- c. Do not threaten, coerce or intimidate any individual.
- d. Do not use your position to gain access to confidential information.
- e. Whilst we are not, and don't want to be a 'No Touch' school, extreme care must be taken when touching. What may be intended as a comforting or friendly gesture may be perceived differently or as a misuse of your position.
- f. Certain comments, although entirely innocent, may be misinterpreted. Care should be taken to avoid this happening and ensure individuals understand what is being said. Be aware of how your actions may be viewed by others.
- g. Do not make sexual remarks to any individual (including text or email) or behave in a way that could be seen as provocative or suggestive.
- h. Do not start or engage in inappropriate conversations that could offend/ embarrass people or be construed as harassment/ bullying.
- i. Dress decently and appropriately. A rule of thumb that is useful to keep in mind would be **"If you can see up it, through it or down it, it is probably not appropriate"**
- j. Wariness should be exercised at school social functions when inhibitions may be reduced by alcohol or atmosphere.

4.2 Pupils

- a. Do not discuss students' individual sexual relationships in class or other inappropriate settings.
- b. Do not discuss your own sexual experiences; this would be inappropriate regardless of your sexuality and could put you in a compromising position.
- c. Don't accept any gifts that are of value or on a regular basis or which might lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
- d. Only give gifts to children that are as part of agreed reward systems and are given equally.
- e. Car lifts to students are strongly advised against except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. sickness or accident, or when another staff member and two or more students are present. Do not transport students in your own vehicle without parental and student consent and without informing your line manager. You must have business insurance for this purpose.
- f. Pupils should not be left unattended/ unsupervised during a lesson. If, for any reason, you need to leave the room you should arrange for another member of staff to supervise the students during your absence.

4.3 One to One Situations

- a. Avoid meeting pupils in remote areas of the school.
- b. Ensure that there is visual access/an open door where possible.
- c. Ensure that other staff are around or aware of the meeting.
- d. Arrange for a colleague to be present if you have any concerns about the student's previous conduct or vulnerability, especially where there is a gender difference.
- e. Don't arrange meetings with a pupil outside of the school premises or hours.
- f. Don't cover windows in classroom doors with posters.

4.4 Social Networking Sites & Social Media: See E-Safety Policy for more information.

- a. Do not accept 'friend' requests from pupils or their parents/ carers.
- b. Do not invite pupils or their family members to be your 'friend.'

- c. Do not invite previous students to be your 'friend' (they may have siblings/friends still in school). Staff are advised not to correspond with former students unless they have been beyond school age for more than 2 years.
- d. Do not upload images of pupils onto your pages.
- e. Do not upload images of yourself or colleagues in a school context.
- f. Think carefully about images that you upload or others upload of you and how they may be perceived.
- g. Ensure that your privacy options are set so that your profile can only be viewed by friends.
- h. Do not post comments that could bring the school into disrepute or compromise professional relationships.

4.5 Emails and Mobile Phones

- a. Do not give out your personal phone number to pupils (on trips, use only the designated school trip phones for this purpose).
- b. Do not text or telephone pupils

5. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

- 5.1 The law requires that certain types of information must be available to auditors, Government departments, parents/ carers and the public. The Governing Body may decide to be open about other types of information. Staff must be aware of which information the Council and Governing Body are and are not open about and act accordingly.
- 5.2 Staff should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any particular information received by an employee from another employee or Governor/ external partner/ affiliate which is personal to them and does not belong to them, should not be divulged by the employee without the prior approval of that person except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.

6. POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

- 6.1 Where staff are required to advise individuals or organisations/ groups, they must do so in ways which accord with Governing Body and be balanced to reflect their political neutrality.
- 6.2 Staff, whether or not politically restricted, must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Governing Body and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

7. RELATIONSHIPS

7.1 The Local Community and Service Users

Staff should always remember their responsibilities to the community and at all times ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the Governing Body of the school.

7.2 Contractors

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Headteacher . Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

7.3 Staff who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the Headteacher.

8. APPOINTMENT AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

8.1 Staff involved in appointments should ensure that they understand the Safer Recruitment Policy and that appointments are made on the basis of merit. At least one member of a selection panel must have undertaken the appropriate safer Recruitment training.

8.2 It would be unlawful for an employee to contribute to the making of an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, staff should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

8.3 Similarly, staff should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a friend, relative, partner, etc.

9. OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS

9.1 Staff must obtain written consent to take any additional outside employment and provide details of this to Human Resources. All Staff should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take outside employment which conflicts with the interests of the Governing Body.

9.2 The use of facilities (typist, telephone, photocopier, etc) for unofficial purposes is forbidden unless appropriate arrangements are made and approval given by the Leadership Team.

9.3 Staff should follow the rules of the Governing Body on ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

10. PERSONAL INTERESTS

10.1 Staff must declare to the Headteacher any non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the Governing Body's interests, for example, an involvement in an

official capacity with an outside organisation which has dealings with the school's interests, e.g. Grant requests. In such situations a declaration of interest form must be completed.

- 10.2 Staff must declare to the Headteacher any financial interests which could conflict with the school's interests, e.g. work for which a fee is received.
- 10.3 Staff should declare to the Governing Body, via the headteacher, membership of any secret societies. The definition of "secret society" is "any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting which:
- is not open to members of the public who are not members;
 - includes in the granting of membership a requirement of the member to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance;
 - Includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy in regard to rules, membership or conduct".
- 10.4 Where staff have declared an interest in regard to paragraphs 8.1, 8.2 or 8.3, the Headteacher will convey details of those interests for keeping in a register.

11. EQUALITY ISSUES

- 11.1 The school is an equal opportunities employer and all staff are under an obligation to ensure that its policies relating to equality issues plus those required by law, are complied with.
- 11.2 Pupils, staff and all members of the local community, customers and other staff have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

12. SEPARATION OF ROLES DURING TENDERING

- 12.1 Staff involved in the tendering process and dealing with external contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles. Where tendering involves an in-house contractor unit staff should be mindful of the need for accountability and aware of the school's commitment to legitimately retaining services in-house. Senior staff who have both client and contractor roles must be aware of the need for equity.
- 12.2 Staff in contractor or clients units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.
- 12.3 Staff who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 12.4 Staff should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former staff or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to business run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

13. CORRUPTION

- 13.1 It is a serious criminal offence for staff, in their official capacity, corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour,

or disfavour, to any person. Gifts may be donated to the school as long as these are clearly declared to the Governing Body.

14. USE OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 14.1 Staff must ensure that they at all times and under all circumstances use public funds in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to avoid legal challenge to the Governing Body.

15. HOSPITALITY

- 15.1 Staff should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the school in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the school should be seen to be represented. They should be properly authorised and recorded.
- 15.2 When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the school.
- 15.3 Staff should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although the keeping of insignificant items of token value such as pens, diaries, etc, is acceptable. The acceptance of gifts of small value from outside suppliers or private individuals may be allowable in certain circumstances if provided for under any school policy which may supplement this Code.
- 15.4 When receiving authorised hospitality staff should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Governing Body may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.
- 15.5 Acceptance by staff of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where the Governing Body is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment etc. are required, staff should ensure the school meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

16. CONTACT WITH THE PRESS AND MEDIA (including social media)

- 16.1 Unless specifically nominated and authorised by the Governing Body, staff are not permitted to give reports or speak to the press and media on matters relating to employment at the school or decisions of the Governing Body. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors is responsible for dealing with the press and media however other staff may be specifically nominated by them. Staff with this responsibility should guard themselves against declaring a view which is contrary to a position taken by the Governing Body and which may be deemed to be critical of that decision.
- 16.2 Nothing in this Code is intended to inhibit or restrict the reasonable and legitimate role of trade union representatives but they are bound, in carrying out their role, to honour the intent of the Code. No representative should use unauthorised information in their union roles.

17. COMPUTER USAGE: Please refer to the E-Safety Policy for more information

19 SUPPORT OF TRADE UNIONS

Our aim is to have a representative in school of all the main teacher unions and UNISON. This will assist in the following ways:

- Dealing with internal communication among colleagues on national issues and policies.
- Liaising with the Leadership Team about generic issues of concern. The aim would be to work together constructively to find, where possible and appropriate, a means of supporting staff.
- Liaising with the Leadership Team regarding individual concerns that staff have.

20 STAFF DRESS CODE

- Staff must wear ID badges on the school premises at all times.
- At all other times these staff shall comply with the Staff Dress Code.
- Staff must wear smart and professional dress. Staff must ensure their clothing is appropriate for the school environment and working with children. Revealing clothing must not be worn at any time. See Section 4.1i Examples of revealing clothing would be low cut tops and short skirts.
- Footwear should be professional and sensible and not compromise health and safety. Staff should consider mobility/stability if they may be required to quickly evacuate the premises or quickly attend an incident.
- The Dress Code shall not apply on training days or school closure periods but as a general rule of thumb staff should follow the Dress Code when they are required to work with pupils or parents.
- It may be appropriate for staff to wear casual dress on certain trips (such as residential) however revealing clothing must not be worn. The person organising the trip should seek clarification from their Leadership link if in doubt and ensure staff involved are aware.
- The dress code may be varied by agreement with the headteacher where there are medical reasons for doing so. Any exception must be supported by a medical report/ letter from the member of staff's doctor.

21 BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT & PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Serious misconduct is behaviour which undermines the contractual relationship between the employee and employer, and/or threatens the wellbeing, ethos and doctrinal norms of the school, or its staff and students. Serious misconduct includes, but is not confined to, the examples below:

1. Refusing to perform properly specified duties or to carry out lawful and reasonable instructions of managers or supervisors.
2. Assaulting or threatening to assault any employee, pupil or visitor on the school premises.
3. Smoking or electronic smoking inside the grounds and building except in the designated area allocated for this purpose.
4. Behaving in a manner causing safety risks to pupils or staff, such as smoking (including electronic smoking or vaping) in areas specifically designated as hazardous or unauthorised use of fire protection or safety equipment. This includes being affected by alcohol or non-prescription drugs while at work.
5. Acting in a manner that could cause offence to other people (or groups of people).
6. Repeatedly contravening this policy.

=====