

## Code of

## Conduct

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**Code of Conduct**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to establish and encourage all employees to achieve high standards of conduct at work, and to help provide a fair and consistent way of dealing with alleged failures to observe them. All employees have personal and legal responsibilities, including - treating others with dignity and respect; acting honestly; maintaining confidentiality; using public funds and school equipment appropriately; adhering to health and safety guidelines; and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff.

This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where employees need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in the school and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours through reference to the documents highlighted in the “Required Reading” throughout the Code.

**2. Compliance with the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality**

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and with the associated policies (“Recommended Reading”) may result in disciplinary action being taken and the school reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

**3. Professional behaviour and conduct**

**3.1 Treating other people with dignity and respect**

All employees are expected to treat colleagues, pupils, parents/carers and external contacts, with dignity and respect. Staff are required to comply with the EPA's equality policies in respect of colleagues, pupils, parents/carers and other contacts. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

**3.2 Appropriate relationships with students**

School employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees in schools are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves.

**3.3 Professional behaviour**

All employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public. Employees should demonstrate honesty and integrity and maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour, both inside and outside the workplace, which enable them to uphold public trust and confidence in the school. Breaches of conduct and personal behaviour will be dealt with under the Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy.

* Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of Standlake School and the EPA into disrepute.
* Staff should uphold decent standards of ‘smart casual’ dress. This does not include jeans, t-shirts, clothing with inappropriate motifs and inappropriate footwear. All staff must wear suitable clothing when delivering PE which is different to the normal day wear. Just as students are expected to wear uniform and PE kit, the same principles of fitness for purpose should be reflected in staff dress.
* Staff should be punctual at all times. This includes the start of the day, the end of break times, meetings and for other agreed duties. Staff should ensure that their line manager is kept informed as to their whereabouts and expected time of return if off-site.
* Within the expectation of maintaining a work/life balance, staff should ensure that they spend the requisite amount of time on the school premises to ensure that their duties can be carried out effectively.
* All leave should be approved prior to it being taken, including parental leave, special leave etc. Failure to notify absence, including absence because of sickness, could lead to disciplinary action, as could a false declaration of sickness.
* Personal property of a sexually explicit nature such as books, magazines, DVDs or such material on any electronic media must not be brought onto or stored on the school premises.

**3.4 Criminal Actions**

Employees must inform the CEO immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The CEO will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the school.

**3.5 Required reading:**

* EPA’s Safeguarding Statement
* Keeping Children Safe In Education
* Equalities Policy
* Pay and Appraisal Documents

**4. Declaration of interests**

An employee is required to declare this where the group or organisation would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

Employees should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the EPA their relationship with any individual(s) where this might cause a conflict with school activities. Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and therefore if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to take advice from their union. All declarations, including nil returns, should be submitted in writing to the CFO on the school Register of Business Interests.

**5. Probity of records and other documents**

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence. Where an employee who has claimed any benefit, including housing benefit, either directly or indirectly and has failed to disclose their full earnings, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the Police.

**6. Financial inducements**

**6.1 Financial Regulations for schools**

All employees must comply with the academy's financial regulations. Employees should familiarise themselves with the regulations but some of the principal employee requirements are summarised below.

**6.2 Business Contacts**

In this section, "*business contact*" refers to any person, body or organisation with which the school is involved on a financial or charitable basis (including contractors; developers; consultants; regional or national charities). This also includes business contacts who are potential suppliers (e.g. they are tendering for future business).

**6.3 Declaration of gifts**

Any gifts that are received should be declared in writing to the Trustees on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality with the exception of those items specifically identified in sections 6.4 below. This document shall remain available for inspection by the authority's Internal Audit department.

**6.4 Gifts or hospitality to an employee**

Where a business contact offers a personal gift, personal payment or other incentive such as secondary employment to an employee, these should not be accepted and should be returned with a suitable official letter. Such offers should be declared to the Trustees and recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

If it is not possible to return gifts then the employee who deals with that supplier should declare the gift to the Trustees who will keep a record or it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the school and should be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

The only exceptions to these are:

* Low cost, functional items suitable for business use rather than personal use and displaying the supplier’s logo e.g. diaries, calendars and pens. These items may be accepted and do not have to be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
* Gifts offered by parents or pupils to staff to express their thanks, such as boxes of chocolates. For the avoidance of doubt employees must always refuse gifts of money.

Where hospitality in the form of meals and drinks is offered by a business contact, this is only acceptable where it forms part of a normal business meeting (for example, refreshments at training events or meals at evening meetings). Offers of hospitality to specific events, such as a dinner or sporting event, should only be accepted after authorisation from the Board of Trustees. These would normally only be approved where there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the school and the hospitality would not expose the school to criticism that the business contact was exerting undue influence. These should be recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

**6.5 Use of school contacts**

Apart from participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups for their members, employees shall not use EPA business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade / discount prices for non-school activities.

**6.6 Required reading:**

* Financial Regulations
* Whistleblowing Policy

**7. Use of premises & equipment**

Equipment and premises are available only for EPA-related activities and should not be used for fulfilment of another job or post or for excessive or regular personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the CFO. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, computers and premises. Any EPA equipment that is used outside EPA premises, for example laptops, should be returned to the EPA when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the CEO.

**8. Other employment**

Employees are permitted to take up secondary employment, as long as the activity does not constitute a conflict of interest, or adversely affect their primary employment.

Employees are required to keep the CEO (Board of Trustees if the employee is the CEO) informed of their employment at other organisations.

**9. Health and Safety**

**Employees must adhere to the EPA’s Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.**

This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at Standlake School or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and the local authority.

**9.1 Use of vehicles**

For their own protection staff should never give lifts to students. Employees using private vehicles for school business must ensure:

* The vehicle is road worthy and complies with Road traffic/Transport regulations.
* That the vehicle is insured for ‘business use’.
* They are licensed to drive the vehicle.
* They do not drive under the influence of drink/drugs or where there is ill health that may impair their ability to drive the vehicle safely.

**9.2 Required reading:**

* Health and Safety Policy
* OCC Driving At Work Policy

**10. Use of alcohol and illegal drugs**

The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee’s working life, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the EPA’s reputation and public confidence.

**10.1 Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school site.

**11. Use of school communication systems**

Staff must not use EPA systems (phone, email, computers etc) for personal use. Inappropriate usage of the EPA’s communication systems, which includes excessive or regular personal use, may result in disciplinary action for the employee and in serious cases could lead to an employee’s dismissal.

The EPA has the right to monitor emails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production within working hours, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems by employees. Employees should be aware that the EPA has the right to access employees’ personal email and computer files if required for investigation of misuse. Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential.

Inappropriate use of email and internet systems also includes viewing, publication or circulation of illegal or offensive material, viewing, publication or circulation of junk mail, including chain letters, jokes or large attachments, gambling or gaming. Employees who receive inappropriate communications should inform their line manager immediately.

**11.1 Social Networking sites**

Staff should be wary of communicating with parents and ex-pupils and should avoid putting personal information on social networking sites, e.g. Facebook. Allowing access to personal electronic communications could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the EPA or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Staff must never make social media postings that could be defamatory towards the school, staff, children or the teaching profession and lead to undermining the reputation of the school. Staff should never allow pupils currently attending the school to be part of, or have access to, any personal electronic social networking. School representatives should not post photographs or images of school events on- social media sites unless approved by the CEO. Breaches of conduct and inappropriate personal behaviour online will be dealt with under the School’s Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy.

**11.2 Required reading**

* Acceptable User & E-Safety Policy

**12. Confidentiality**

All employees come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to read and to observe the requirements of GDPR. Staff should be careful not to discuss confidential matters with members of the public, or where they may be overheard, for example on the playground or in corridors, lifts or shops.

By signing this agreement you will not share pupil/staff information with anyone that breaches confidentiality.

Examples of confidential information are:

* Information about pupils, staff and events that occur in school
* Information accessed by ‘privilege’ e.g. staff notices on noticeboard, conversations.

If you see something that concerns you, please discuss the matter with your line manager. If you have a complaint or concern, please see the Complaints policy and Whistleblowing policies.

You must never use information about individual children outside the school without parental permission (photographs/names).

**12.1 Managing Data**

Under GDPR, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

**12.2 Disclosing Data**

Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the EPA to other parties, for example, parents, colleagues or internet blogs. There are particular exceptions to this; for example disclosure of suspected or alleged abuse of a pupil to Child Protection officers; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or disclosure under the Whistleblowing procedure. All communication with the media must be directed through the CEO.

There are circumstances in which staff are obliged to release pupil data, for example, parents seeking information about pupil progress or other colleagues in the school.

Staff should be aware that, from time to time, information about employees’ salaries is matched with other public sector information (for example housing benefits) in order to prevent fraudulent claims.

**12.3 Access to Data**

Everyone has the right to request access to data that is held about them and such requests should be made to the CFO who will address the request in conjunction with the EPA’s GDPR Officer.

**12.4 Required reading:**

* GDPR Policy
* Complaints Policy

**13. Copyright**

Copyright legislation is displayed beside the photocopier and employees are required to adhere to the guidance provided about use of educational resources.

**13.1 Required reading:**

* Copyright notices in school

14.0 Maintaining harmonious relationships and safe environments:

The following points have been identified specifically by school staff (and some parental feedback) as ‘small but sometimes significant’ behaviours that need to take place to ensure that colleagues work happily, productively and successfully together:

Communication

* Teachers are responsible for sharing concerns, worries and issues about pupils with the parents on the day
* Teachers to manage things so they can be ‘on the door’ to talk to parents at the beginning and end of day most of the time
* 2 working days is an acceptable response time to email communications.
* The majority of staff do not work full time so, where appropriate, keep everyone informed and updated by email with what is relevant to them.
* If you don’t know or understand something. Ask someone.
* If you are unhappy about something or someone, address it personally
* Timetables on the staff noticeboard are the master copies. Changes must be shared.

Resources and Equipment

* If you need to do a large amount of photocopying (class tests etc) do it after school and not first thing in the morning
* Let the office know if you use the last item from the resource cupboard or notice something is running low. Do not ‘stockpile’ resources in your classroom.
* Leave equipment and classrooms as you expect to find them, especially the IPAD/Chrome Book trollies and the PE shed. *If it is untidy, a gentle reminder to the previous user is appropriate*
* Take your turn in emptying and filling the dishwasher. Don’t leave dirty dishes and cups in the sink. The staffroom is a communal area that needs to be kept clean, tidy and organised at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

* P x 6: Prior Planning and Preparation Prevents Poor Performance. Be prepared for the day, the week, the term. Don’t leave things to the last minute
* We are a small school with limited ‘finance and people’ resources so require everyone to ‘do their bit’ for the good of the school. *Sometimes this means doing things you don’t always like or want to do.* Don’t leave it to the few to cover the needs of the many
* Play an active role in professional discussions, meetings and training.
* Act on the actions from meetings and INSET days
* Take responsibility for catching up on missed meetings
* Attend duties on time, all the time.
* Be responsible for organising cover if you are going to be on ‘planned absence