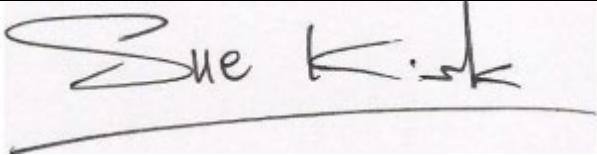




## Staff Code of Conduct

Monitoring Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer
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Chair of Committee signature	

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## 1. Introduction

This Code describes the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from our staff and any staff seconded or engaged from other organisations to undertake work within the Voyage Education Partnership (the Trust). It also highlights some types of behaviour or conduct which might be considered incompatible with being a Trust employee. It is intended to help you by describing the standards expected of you.

Contravening or failing to act within the spirit of the Code, or behaving in a manner which could bring the good name of the Trust into disrepute, whether or not within the workplace or working time, might be seen as a breach of discipline and could lead to action being taken against you under the appropriate procedure.

While workers who are not employees of the Trust are expected to comply with the spirit of the Code, any action that may be taken in response to a breach will depend on the precise nature of their working relationship with the Trust.

This code relates to all staff working for the Trust. Teachers must be aware that there are also published Teachers' Standards and are advised to familiarise themselves with the requirements of these.

## 2. Guiding principles

As a Trust employee, you should put the well-being, development and progress of children and young people first. You should recognise that you are in a position to influence children and young people through your slightest actions, comments or behaviour.

To the public you are a representative of the Trust. You are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional competence, knowledge, integrity, confidentiality, financial propriety and personal conduct. Contact with all members of the Trust's community, including parents and outside visitors, should be courteous, efficient and impartial to all groups and individuals. You must also familiarise yourself with and adhere to any rules or codes of conduct or policies relating to the Trust and your role and you should comply with all reasonable requirements or instructions from the Headteacher or Chief Executive.

It is not appropriate for you when working within your role as an employee to oppose the stated aims and policies of the Trust or to undermine the performance of its duties and responsibilities. It is important for all employees to present a unified image to the public.

You should ensure that your relationships with your fellow employees and with pupils are always conducted in a professional and courteous manner; you should not censure other colleagues or criticise their work in the hearing of a pupil or parent/carer.

It is not acceptable for you to publicly criticise or blame the management, colleagues or the or the Trust through any medium including internet 'blogs', websites or social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter and you must be aware that the laws governing defamation, breach of copyright, etc. apply equally to 'blogging' as to other forms of communications. Offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and may constitute a disciplinary and/or criminal offence, as could the disclosure/publication of any confidential or personal information about the Trust, its staff, pupils or other members of the Trust community.

Any disagreement involving the interpretation or application of the Code as it applies to you should be discussed with the Headteacher or your Line Manager in the first instance. However, if you feel the Code is being applied unreasonably you may be able to seek redress through the Grievance Procedure.

### 3. Personal interests

The interests of the Trust or the way you do your job must not be influenced by personal interests or those of relatives, friends or membership of external organisations or societies. There should be no grounds for suspicion that you are using your position with or knowledge of the Trust for personal gain or that you could be influenced by improper motives. If you belong to outside organisations, including voluntary organisations, there must be no conflict with your job or other Trust interests. You should advise your Headteacher or Line Manager in writing about anything which could give this impression.

### 4. Private work

Trust premises, equipment, working time or other resources must not be used to undertake private work.

The Trust needs to be aware if its employees undertake private work or voluntary activities in their own time to ensure that there is no conflict of interests with the Trust and to meet its obligations under Health and Safety legislation. Therefore, to protect yourself and the Trust from potential criticism you should not put yourself in a position where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interests. You should be aware that outside work or activity, whether or not you receive payment, could reduce your ability to safely and effectively carry out your employment with the Trust, e.g. through tiredness, and would be considered unacceptable.

You must advise your line manager before engaging in any other work especially if it could reasonably be seen to conflict with your employment with the Trust or lead to misunderstanding or criticism.

You must not undertake private work for any individual, organisation, department or establishment which otherwise would be undertaken as part of your normal duties.

You must not undertake private work when on sick leave without the express knowledge and prior written approval of your Headteacher or the Chief Executive and subject to appropriate medical advice.

During a period of paid leave or suspension, you must not undertake private work within your normal paid working hours and without the prior written approval of your Headteacher or the Chief Executive.

### 5. Intellectual Property

You should be aware that 'intellectual property' such as software, ideas, documents, etc. created during your employment belongs to the Trust. All files, materials, the media upon which they are located and all software programmes or packages which are utilised or developed solely for or in connection with your job remain the property of the Trust.

### 6. Confidentiality

The Trust is committed to open government and, in law, certain information must be made available to councillors, government departments, service users and the public. However, you must make sure you know whether information is 'public' or confidential and treat it accordingly.

You may sometimes acquire information at work which has not been made public or is confidential. Examples include information about a pupil or family, a colleague, information on tenders or costs, the proceedings of confidential meetings.

You must ensure that sensitive and/or confidential information is properly secured and safeguarded at all times especially if being transported in paper or electronic formats. Particular care must be taken with information stored on portable electronic media such as laptops and memory devices which are often targeted for theft due to their high intrinsic value.

Confidential Information which comes into your possession must not be used for personal benefit or divulged to other parties except in the proper course of duty, for example to other professionals working with the same child. If you have any doubt whether or not disclosure is appropriate, you must check with your Headteacher or Line Manager before releasing confidential information.

Some information can be extremely valuable in business and commerce and its publication loss or misuse could seriously disadvantage the Trust and its employees. Therefore, it is important that you do not, deliberately or inadvertently, pass on information, including software, during or after your employment with the Trust, to anyone who has no right to receive it. You must not discuss, disclose, publicise or use such information for your own or anyone else's personal interest or advantage.

You must decline any approaches or offers made asking for information which could be detrimental to, or help others to gain a contract, grant or any other advantage from the Trust and/or its employees, e.g. a potential contractor could offer a financial reward for information leading to the award of a major contract. Approaches or offers of this kind must be declared to your Headteacher or the Chief Financial Officer without delay.

You must not criticise the Trust, its policies or staff in open media such as internet 'blogs', websites, social networking sites, etc. where it may be seen by parents, children or others in the Trust's community.

## 7. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Staff working with children and young people are in a particular position of great trust. Any breach of that trust, or which impacts the safety or welfare of children and young people, including but not limited to assault, sexual misconduct, or breach of the policies and procedures meant to safeguard pupils, will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. This may lead to disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal without notice.

Staff are expected to comply with the Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2019, which provides practical guidance about which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided. A copy of the guidance can be found on the [Safer Recruitment Consortium](#) website and is available in the Human Resources section of the Trust's policy portal.

## 8. Contact with the Media

Unless you are properly authorised to speak with, write or give interviews to the media you should politely refer any enquiries from the media on work related matters to the Trust's Marketing and Communications Officer or the Chief Executive.

## 9. Information Technology and Data Protection

Everyone using computing equipment has a duty of care to use it according to prescribed arrangements, e.g. to avoid introducing computer viruses, to comply with the Data Protection Act, and to safeguard and ensure the security of information. You must familiarise yourself with the Trust's ICT policies, including use of the internet and social networking. In particular, all use of the internet

and email facilities must be authorised, legal, appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of Trust policies. Personal use of any facilities – including laptops – must be authorised and only undertaken at times deemed appropriate by your Line Manager.

Users shall not use the internet or email for the following:

- to knowingly break the law
- to fail to comply with existing Trust policy
- to compromise the integrity of any network or system
- to access, display or transmit any kind of sexually explicit material or any offensive or discriminatory material of any kind
- to make unauthorised contact with outside bodies
- to download software or play games
- to bet or gamble
- To disclose private or confidential information.

Failure to comply with the policies in force or any unauthorised use of such facilities will be dealt with in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedure.

Employees should also be aware when they are using personal IT equipment for undertaking Trust related business that the same rules apply.

## 10. Gifts, Inducements, Hospitality and Sponsorship

All staff must comply with the Trust's Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-Bribery policy at all times.

## 11. Use of Trust Resources and Equipment

Facilities, equipment, vehicles, materials and other resources provided by the Trust for use in your work must not be used for any other purpose without permission or appropriate payment, e.g. photocopying, private telephone calls. Mobile telephones are provided exclusively for business use and must not be used to make private calls. In this context a call 'home' to advise that you have been unavoidably delayed because of work would not be considered a private call.

## 12. Equality Issues

All members of the community, including pupils, families and other employees have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity. You must make yourself aware of and comply with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policies and procedures.

## 13. Standards of Appearance

The Trust does not impose particular dress standards but staff are expected to present a reasonable and professional appearance and dress appropriately to the circumstances within their working environment, bearing in mind that you are working with children and young people. Staff must be clean and tidy and ensure good personal hygiene.

Where uniform or protective clothing is issued it must be worn as required when at work or representing the Trust.

When wearing uniform or other items which identify you as an employee of the Trust you must maintain appropriate standards of conduct whether or not on duty, e.g. when travelling to and from work.

## 14. Relatives and Close Personal Relationships within the Workplace

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias you should endeavour not be directly involved in the appointment, promotion, discipline or other employment decision relating to another employee to whom you are related or with whom you have a close personal relationship. If a situation arises in which you feel you may be in such a position, please seek the advice of the Trust's Human Resources Team.

If you work in close proximity with other employees or pupils to whom you are related or have a close personal connection you must maintain a strictly professional relationship at work. You should also be aware that if any relationship leads to disruption in the workplace, unacceptable conduct or performance or situations involving undue favouritism or detriment, action will be taken under the appropriate procedure which could lead to you being redeployed or your contract terminated.

## 15. Smoke Free Environment

All Trust buildings, workplaces and vehicles are smoke free areas. Since July 2007, it has been against the law to smoke in workplaces; failure to comply is now a criminal offence.

## 16. Drugs and Alcohol

Employees must not take drugs, alcohol or any other substance before work, during a break or at lunch time that is capable of causing their behaviour, judgement or performance at work to be affected.

## 17. Health and Safety

Unsafe working can endanger you, your colleagues and members of the public. You must familiarise yourself with the Trust's Health and Safety policy and guidelines for your particular work.

Please speak to your Headteacher or Line Manager for further information. You must follow the rules, codes and safe practices they describe including reporting any accidents, incidents or near misses you have at work.

## 18. Criminal Charges, Cautions and Convictions

You must advise your Headteacher or Line Manager immediately if you are charged with or cautioned or convicted of any criminal offence whilst you are an employee of the Trust. While such proceedings will not necessarily affect your employment, the Trust needs to be sure there are no implications for the Trust, its reputation, safety of children or in relation to the role you undertake.

## 19. Conduct and Performance

Unacceptable behaviour and/or failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct or performance will lead to action being taken against you under the appropriate procedure. This includes specifically the failure to behave at all times in accordance with the Trust's stated values.

You must ensure you understand the requirements of this Code of Conduct and any terms and conditions, rules, standards and requirements that apply to you and your job. Any of the examples of unacceptable behaviour listed below may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct depending on the relevance to your role, your seniority, the seriousness of the act and particular circumstances. The list is not exhaustive and other unacceptable behaviour not specifically listed nevertheless may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct:

- Any form of unjustifiable discrimination, harassment, threatening or bullying behaviour *e.g. on the grounds of race, sex/gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief; whether or not the subject of current legislation;*
- Any physical, emotional or sexual abuse of a child or other vulnerable person;
- Possession, displaying, viewing or downloading of offensive materials, accessing 'unacceptable' websites, e.g. websites of a sexual nature, gambling, betting or gaming, in the workplace or via any portable device, e.g. laptop, mass storage, which is the property of the Trust or whilst on the Trust's property and has been provided in connection with the post holder's work;
- Undertaking private activities during working hours;
- Unpunctuality, misuse of time and time recording, unauthorised absence from work;
- Refusing to comply with reasonable orders and instructions;
- Deliberately causing damage to Trust property;
- Harming or endangering other persons or property, e.g. by contravening safety rules;
- Neglect of duty/lack of due care or diligence, disruptive behaviour, poor attitude;
- Fighting, threatening or actual violence towards, physical assault or abuse of another person whilst at work (NOTE: this does not include reasonable physical restraint necessarily carried out in the course of duty);
- Theft, unauthorised removal, misappropriation, improper or unauthorised use of Trust or other property, systems including telephones, IT, email and internet), vehicles, equipment, name or other resources. This may include loss by failing to properly secure or safeguard;
- Failure to report criminal convictions, particularly those which may be relevant to the type of work undertaken, e.g. driving convictions where the work necessitates driving on Trust business, indecent assault where working with children or vulnerable adults;
- Fraudulent or misleading practices and/or omissions in connection with official duties, e.g. deliberately falsifying Trust documents, reports, etc.;
- Fraudulent or false claims for payment of salary, expenses and/or allowances, etc. or seeking financial gain by deception;
- Acts involving bribery or corruption;



- Any action for which it would be appropriate for the Trust as an employer to take legal proceedings (irrespective of whether such proceedings are taken);
- Sexual misconduct at work
- Wilfully breaching any Trust policy or procedure;
- Drunkenness, being unable to carry out duties through the influence of any substances including drugs, whether or not prescribed, and alcohol, or for any other avoidable reason.
- Possession, buying or selling of weapons, illegal substances or materials at work;
- Any breach of trust or security in respect of information or procedures;
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain access to any information (including information held or stored by electronic means) to which the employee is not entitled;
- Any action which may bring the good name of the Trust into disrepute;
- As an employee, public opposition to the stated aims and policies of the Trust, criticism or blame of colleagues through any medium including internet 'blogs' , websites, social networking sites, etc.;
- Any action unconnected with work which brings in to question your suitability as an employee of the Trust;
- Failing to report serious misconduct, aiding or inciting another employee to undertake any of the above actions or other act of wrongdoing.