# Employee Code of Conduct

*Model policy adopted from Telford & Wrekin Council*

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| *Introduced by T&W council* | July 2015 |
| *Revised by T&W council* | February 2021 |
| *Consulted recognised Trade Unions on revisions* | Not applicable as changes relate only to updates to Statutory Guidance. |
| *Adopted by Empower Trust* | March 2021 |

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| **Frequency of Review:** | Every 2 years |
| **Date of Approval:** | March 2021 |
| **Date of Next Review:** | March 2027 |
| **Adopted by the Board of Empower Trust** | |

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| **Date of Review:** | **March 2023** | Changes made to policy in accordance with T & W revisions. Namely addition of 4.5 Use of technology and 4.6 – Raising Concerns – Safeguarding - further comprehensive detail added |
| **Date of Review:** | **November 2023** | Changes made in accordance with T&W revisions. Namely updates that reflect KCSIE 2023 and GDPR legislation. |
| **Date of Review:** | **October 2024** | Changes made in accordance with T&W revisions. Namely updates that reflect KCSIE 2024 guidance and legislation. |
| **Date of Review:** | **March 2025** | No Changes to policy |

## 1. Introduction

This document outlines the Trust's expectation in relation to employee conduct and outlines the Trust's responsibility to the employee. This document mainly refers to conduct expected in the work place but may also cover conduct when representing the Trust e.g. whilst at training, attending work related functions or activities on social media that may affect the reputation of the Trust.

It should also be used in conjunction with other relevant policies and standards such as professional standards, child protection and safeguarding policies, behaviour policy, the Disciplinary Policy and associated Discilpnary Rules as well as the contract of employment/written statement of particulars.

Given the nature of this establishment, this document should also be a guide to assist in ensuring children's and employees safety. It therefore explains the responsibilities the Trust has toward employees and children/pupils on a whole school basis

This code should be reviewed regularly by the Trust Board and reissued to staff after the review.

## 2. Duty of Care

The Trust has a duty of care to the pupils/children within it and also to all employees.

This duty should be at the heart of all employee and employer practice.

**Pupils/children** – employees within this Trust have a duty to keep pupils/children safe and protect them from harm, and have a child centred approach to safeguarding, as outlined in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2024.Given the position of trust this places employees in, employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure pupils/children's safety and well being. **Please refer to the Child Protection & Safeguarding in Schools Policies that the school have adopted.**

**Employees** – employers should provide a safe working environment and appropriate guidance regarding safer working practices. They should also ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. Employees will be informed of all relevant policies as part of their induction. Where a new or revised policy is adopted, the Trust / School will ensure each employee has access to it.

In addition, each employee has a personal duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

**Employees should:**

- Understand the responsibilities of their role and the sanctions should these not be followed
- Act and be seen to act in the pupil's/child's best interest
- Act in a way to protect the Trust and Schools reputation
- Avoid conduct which could lead to question over motivation and intentions
- Act in line with Trust and School policy and procedure
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Speak up promptly about any concerns they have or anything they have witnessed that could give rise to concern
- Have due regard that safeguarding children and their welfare is paramount and everyone's business
- All school staff should make the Headteacher or CEO (if this is the headteacher) aware of any relationships and associations both within and outside of the workplace (including online) that may have implications for the safeguarding of children in school.
- Note that unjustifiable delay in reporting concerns is not acceptable

**Employers should:**

- Clarify what is expected about an employee at work and where relevant, outside of work
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- Support for your rights and recognise diversity
- Foster a culture of openness and support
- Ensure that appropriate policies are adopted, implemented, monitored and reviewed e.g. employee policies, safeguarding, child protection, code of conduct
- Ensure that employees have access to and understand guidance, related policies and systems that are in place
- Ensure that employees are not placed in a vulnerable position
- Ensure that those who provide services or activities are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Treat employees reasonably and fairly

**3. Complaints**

Should an employee have a concern with the way in which they are being treated by their employer, the Grievance process should be followed. Advice should be sought by the employee from their relevant trade union.

Should an employee have a complaint relating to the Trust / School then they should use the relevant policy e.g. Whistleblowing Procedures, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or any other procedure that the Trust / school has identified and adopted.

Should the employer have concerns regarding employee conduct, the employer should always try to resolve the matter at the lowest possible level i.e. through discussion with the employee. For more serious matters, the Trust / School may need to refer to the relevant employment policy e.g. discipline.

**4. Employee Code of Conduct**

This code covers a number of situations but does not cover all eventualities. Where it is necessary to refer to a specific policy, this will be noted.

Furthermore, the document produced by the Safer Recruitment Consortium - Guidance on Safer Working Practice is universally regarded as a best practice guide to work alongside local policies

**4.1 Dress and Appearance**

All employees should dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role, individuals they work with and work they undertake.

Clothing and appearance should not:

- cause embarrassment or give rise to any misunderstanding
- be likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- be considered to be discriminatory or culturally sensitive
- be political or represent contentious slogans

**4.2 Behaviour**

All employees have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in both the Trust / School and their own ability to provide an outstanding level of education and care whilst safeguarding the welfare and best interest of the pupils/children they are responsible for.

Equally, all employees should be able to carry out their duties in an environment where all individuals treat each other fairly and with respect and dignity. Acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated.

Employees should foster an approach which is aligned to the ethos of the Trust and School and understand the Trust / Schools behaviour policy. Therefore employees can expect to be treated reasonably and fairly.

It is not acceptable to behave in a manner which could question an employee's suitability to work with pupils/children or encourage others to make unprofessional comments or comments which could cause offense.

This level of behaviour is to be expected at all times when representing the School which includes attending such events as training and work related social functions.

With the rise of social media, it is not acceptable for employees to behave in such a way that would not uphold public confidence within the school. **Please refer to the schools child protection & safeguarding in schools policies.**

**4.3 Confidentiality**

Employees can expect to have their personal information secured confidentially. Personal matters should also be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Employees within the Trust / School may have access to private or sensitive information about the pupils/children within the School. These details must be kept confidential and only shared when it is in the child's best interest to do so.

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.Personal information is information about a living individual, who can be identified from the information.

The Trust is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and handles all personal information in a manner that complies with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR. It is the **personal responsibility** of all employees (temporary or permanent), Trustees, Governors, contractors, agents and anyone else processing information on our behalf to comply with this policy.

Storage of any such information should be in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Any deliberate breach of this policy could amount to a criminal offence under one or more pieces of legislation, for example the Computer Misuse Act 1990, the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR. All breaches will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Employees should report concerns to a senior member of the School / Trust/ Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Employees should be aware of the requirement for the DPO / IGO to report breaches of data protection legislation to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

**4.4 Gifts**

Employees should not receive or accept gifts, loan, fees, hospitality or other reward ***which influences the way*** in which duties are carried out.

For transparency if an employee is ***given low level "thank you" gifts from parents or children e.g. homemade gifts, flowers, chocolates, biscuits etc.*** then they should let the school know. In all cases a professional judgement should be made around what is acceptable, proportionate and appropriate. If in doubt the employee should seek guidance from the Head teacher of the school.

Employees have a responsibility to report any such reward or suspicions of any such awards to the **appropriate person within the school.**

**4.5 Use of Internet and Social Media**

The use of the Internet and Social Media in the work place can be very useful but also can be open to misuse. Employees must take every step to protect themselves when using such 'media' and **must refer to the schools acceptable use of technology and use of Social Media policy.**

Employees must also be careful when using social media personally to ensure that no activity conflicts with expected standards of behaviour for adults working with children or may reflect negatively on the Trust or School reputation. Should such information be brought to the Trust / Schools attention, the disciplinary process may be followed.

**4.5 Use of technology**

Staff are not permitted to use personal technology devices while working directly with pupils and/or during their hours of work. These should only be used away from areas children access.

Where professional technology devices are provided to staff for the purpose of their role and responsibilities, these are permitted.

Staff have a responsibility to model safe practice and use of technology devices at all time.

Staff engaging in online learning should display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would in the real world; they should also role model this to pupils and parents.

**4.6 Raising Concerns – Safeguarding**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff should be committed to working in a culture where the values of the school and effective safeguarding are upheld, this includes openness, trust and honestly. All staff are responsible for implementing and reinforcing these values.

All schools have a standalone Child Protection and Safeguarding in Schools Policies with appropriate appendices and related safeguarding procedures. For avoidance of doubt ***all school staff*** need to be aware and implement the schools safeguarding and associated policies.

It also acknowledged that "Working Together" 2023 and "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2024 Parts 1-5 are viewed on the same principle & Annex A & B. For schools with early years children Section 3 of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024 should also be viewed.

On a general level the highest standards of safeguarding conduct are expected from the whole Trust and school community. It is important to note that in particular well known and peripheral areas of safeguarding concern should be paramount to a child's welfare namely;

- Abuse, neglect and exploitation as defined in KCSIE 2024
- Extremism & Radicalisation (Statutory - "Prevent duty guidance" March 2023)

Furthermore staff are expected to encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff should ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

Further areas (amongst others) for all staff to note are;

- Children That Have Gone Missing
- Children Absent or Missing From Education - Whether Authorised or Not
- Poor/Irregular Attendance (Protocol for Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Not Receiving Education)
- Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE) -T&W Pathway Process
- Harm
- Drug and substance misuse
- Suicide Intervention
- Fabricated and induced illness

School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies will take account of all these issues and other areas and therefore staff conduct in addressing any safeguarding concerns is paramount and doing nothing is not an option.
All concerns for a child's welfare should be responded to and reported as set out in our Child Protection & Safeguarding policy. A delay in responding and reporting concerns for a child's welfare beyond what is reasonably practicable is a breach of this code of conduct.

If anyone working in the school community identifies a concern about a breach of this code of conduct, they must 'speak up'. All those working in the school community must follow the school Whistleblowing Policy.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable our school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; and minimise the risk of abuse. A culture of vigilance will help to ensure that adults working in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

All staff should report concerns that are of a 'low-level'. This can be a concern of any kind, this can include a member of the school community acting in a way that:

- does not meet the allegations thresholds or of a level to refer to the LADO
- that does not uphold the school code of conduct, including out of work.

All 'low-level' concerns must be reported to the Headteacher. They may choose to delegate the investigation of 'low-level' concerns to other members of the senior leadership team. Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.

Staff should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, including peer on peer sexual violence and sexual harassment. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

**4.7 Conflicts of Interest**

Employees must be mindful to avoid personal circumstances which could lead to conflict of interest and should discuss/report any potential conflicts of interest with the Head teacher as soon as possible.

**4.8 Health & Safety**

The Trust /school will endeavour to abide by Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety and well being of employees at work.

Employees are expected to follow appropriate Health and Safety guidance to keep themselves and others safe at work.

Employees have a duty to identify and manage hazards and take steps to reduce potential levels of risk.

Employees also have their own duty of care to take care of themselves and anyone else affected by their actions or failings.

