



Human Resources

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

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Director of Finance & Resources

Introduction

The terms School, Academy and Trust are used interchangeably in this policy

The Wandle Learning Trust Staff Code of Conduct, is based mainly on the one used by Wandsworth Council for LEA schools and the [Teachers' Standards](#) as published by the Secretary of State for Education.

To underline the importance that the Trustees Body attaches to the Code, you will be required to abide by its provisions as a condition of your employment. Any alleged breach will be investigated as a possible disciplinary offence.

All staff must sign and return the 2 pro-formas in appendix 2. This will confirm that you have read and understood the staff code of conduct and specifically have agreed to:

1. The policy on the acceptable use of ICT
2. The DfE summary guide to Safeguarding.
3. Declarations of any pecuniary interests.

All staff should behave at all times in such a manner as to demonstrate personal courtesy, integrity and enhance the dignity and standards of the school in which they work. In addition, they should strive constantly to develop their own skills and expertise.

Please read the code carefully and any other documents referred to within it, which are relevant to your own work. If you have any queries, please raise them with your local Business Manager or Headteacher in the first instance.

The following Policies are also closely related to the staff code of conduct and staff should make themselves aware of their contents:

Disciplinary Policies

Expenses & Benefits Policy

Receipt of Gifts & Hospitality Policy

Fraud Policy

The Whistleblowing Policy

Local School Staff Handbook

2. Standards

Headteachers, teachers and support staff are expected to give the highest possible standard of service and to behave with impartiality. The trustees have approved a policy and procedure which is intended to encourage and enable teaching and support staff to raise serious concerns within the school rather than overlooking a problem or “blowing the whistle outside.”

The policy has three aims:-

(a) to provide avenues for all staff to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the Academy’s or Trust’s work and receive feedback on any action taken;

(b) to allow all staff to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the School’s or Trust’s response; and

(c) to reassure all staff that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

If at any time an employee has a serious concern about something which he/she believes in good faith:-

- is unlawful; or
- is against the Trust’s, Academy’s or DfE’s Standing Orders or policies; or
- falls below established standards of practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct; or
- is a health and safety risk to the public as well as other employees or students;
- involves damage to the environment; or
- involves the unauthorised use of public funds; or
- involves possible fraud and corruption; or
- involves sexual or physical abuse of students.

he/she must follow the advice given in the “Policy and Procedure outlined in the Trust’s Whistleblowing Policy. This contains full details about what should be done by the employee. A copy of the policy and procedure to follow can be obtained from the Academy Headteacher, Academy Business Partner or the Director of Finance & Resources, Wandle Learning Trust.

2.1 Personal and Professional Conduct

Registered Teachers

A teacher is 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 throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all time observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard student well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance, punctuality and dress code.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Support Staff

Non-Teaching staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they work and maintain high standards in their own conduct, attendance, punctuality and dress code

3. Disclosure of Information

3.1 It is a disciplinary offence to speak to the press in the capacity as a spokesperson for an Academy school or the Trust, without prior permission from the Headteacher or one of the Executive Heads of the Trust.

3.2 Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching 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.

3.3 Intellectual property or copyright created during the course of employment by the the Trust shall remain the property of the trust and must not be used by employees in a personal capacity without prior permission.

4. Safeguarding

Staff must read and make themselves aware of the Trust's safeguarding policy, which is available from the Senior Safeguarding Lead in their school, their school office or school intranet site.

Ofsted adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004 and in the Department for Education guidance document ***Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014)***. It identifies safeguarding as promoting the welfare of children. This can be summarised as:

- protecting children and learners from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's and learners' health or development
- ensuring that children and learners are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children and learners to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

It is a ***statutory requirement*** that every member of staff employed by the Trust is responsible for safeguarding all children within the school. If anyone discloses something to you or you witness something which you think puts the students or other members of the community at risk, you **must** refer this immediately to the Designated Member of Staff (DMS) at the School. If in doubt, details of who the DMS is can be accessed from the school office or any member of the senior leadership team.

If none of the DMS are available you must refer to another member of the Senior Leadership team who will follow up on your concerns.

5. Acceptable use of ICT by Staff (see separate policy for more information)

Failure by staff to follow these steps on acceptable use, can lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

You must not:

- attempt to access inappropriate sites such as gambling or pornography.
- use inappropriate language in emails or other electronic communications.
- use your personal (non LGFL) email account for work purposes, you may leave yourself and the school liable to data and child protection issues.

- use any “cloud” storage service for holding work related materials that have not been approved by the Trust.
- reveal your passwords to anyone, except via special request from the Trust Data Protection Officer, Academy Headteacher or IT Manager.

You must:

- keep personal use of computers or the Internet to an absolute minimum, during school hours.
- get permission from the Headteacher, if you need to access a website for teaching and learning purposes which could be seen as inappropriate,
- report to the Headteacher any inappropriate materials that may appear on your computer.
- ensure any work related data stored on personal devices (USB drives, tablets, phones etc) is suitably encrypted.
- Change your passwords on a regular basis (at least yearly) and they must be changed immediately on initial receipt.

Use of Social Media

- Staff should not use Facebook or other social networking sites for personal use during school hours.
- Do not post photographs of school events on personal social media accounts. and ensure all security settings on personal media accounts are set to the highest security level.
- Do not communicate with students or parents using personal social media accounts

6. Political Neutrality

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff must follow every lawfully expressed Trust or Academy policy and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

7. Relationships

7.1 Students

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should behave with compassion and impartiality towards students. They should be sensitive in expressing criticism of pupils and avoid hurtful comments of a personal nature. Reports should be based on factual and objective information. Confidentiality should be honoured, and nothing should be done which exploits, undermines or abuses a student.

7.2 Colleagues

Headteacher, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should ensure discussions with colleagues concerning professional problems are kept confidential, that their professional standing is respected, particularly when making any assessment observations of their work, and that they do not denigrate any colleagues in the presence of others.

7.3 Parents

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should give a true representation of facts concerning any aspect of the education development of children. They should respect both the joint responsibility which must exist between the school and parents, and the parental right to enquiry, consultation and information with regard to the educational development of their child.

7.4 Local Academy Members, Trustees and Trust Members

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should not knowingly distort or misinterpret facts concerning the school. They should be objective and respect the overall joint responsibilities which exist with the Trustees or Local Academy Committees for the conduct of the Academy and Trust.

7.5 Contractors

Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should make known to the Headteacher any relationship of a business or private nature with external contractors or potential contractors as these orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders and no special favours should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives involved in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against. Headteachers are expected to bring such relationships to the attention of the Chair of the Local Academy Committee and the Director of Finance and Business.

8. Staff Recruitment & Other Employment Matters

8.1 Recruitment should always be carried out in a fair and equitable manner. Trustees, Local Academy Members, Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit only. Staff should not misrepresent any professional or other qualifications. Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should not seek to advertise or canvass for the purpose of promoting

their own advantage. It would be unlawful for an employee to make 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, employees 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. The same approach should be adopted in relation to decisions relating to discipline promotion or pay adjustments.

8.2 Requirements to disclose relevant criminal convictions. Criminal convictions have an impact on certain jobs within the trust. If a member of the Teaching or non-Teaching Staff is convicted of an offence at any time during employment with the trust, there is a requirement to notify the Headteacher within two weeks of the conviction.

Failure to do so will constitute a serious offence under the Disciplinary Code in addition to any disciplinary offence which the conviction, treated separately, may constitute. A copy of the schedule of relevant convictions can be obtained in confidence from the Director of Finance and Business. Headteachers should make known any such convictions to the Chair of Trustees.

9. Outside Commitments

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take outside employment which conflicts with the trust's or school's interest or affects professional standing. All Non-teaching Staff above Scale 6 must obtain written consent to having, or taking up, any outside employment from the Chair of their Local Academy Committee.

10. Personal Interests

Teachers and Non-teaching Staff must declare in writing to the Headteacher, any financial or non-financial interest including personal relationships, which may influence, or be seen by another party to influence a particular situation. It is not possible to define all possible situations but a good test is to ask the question, "If other people knew the facts, might they reasonably think I had an interest." The Headteacher must declare in writing any similar interest to the Chair of Trustees.

11. Equality Issues

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should ensure that any policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the trustees are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law. All members of the local community have a right to be treated with fairness and equality.

12. Corruption

Teachers and Non-teaching Staff must declare in writing any financial interests in the event of there being potential conflict. Furthermore, all staff must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them 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 in their official capacity. In such circumstances if any money, gift, etc., is proved to have been paid or given to or received by a member of school staff then such money, gift, etc., is deemed to have been paid or given and received corruptly unless the contrary is proved. Headteachers must declare in writing any similar interest to the Chair of Trustees.

All staff must fill in and sign a pecuniary interests form and declare any business interests. See appendix 1

13. Use of Resources

Headteacher, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff must ensure that they use public funds and any other assets entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and not use them for personal ends nor mix them with personal resources. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the Academy.

14. Hospitality (Also see Expenses and Benefits policy)

This involves both the giving and receiving of hospitality. When deciding whether or not it is justifiable, Hospitality must always be:

- a) in connection with official duties;
- b) justified in the public interest e.g. providing useful working benefits to the school or trust in the community;
- c) of a modest level;
- d) given/received openly;
- e) able to meet any subsequent public scrutiny.

In addition, where hospitality involves visits to theatres, sporting events etc., these can only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, with payment of the face value of the tickets going to the school fund.

Where any Teachers or Non-teaching Staff wish to give or receive hospitality other than between-meal refreshments they must seek written approval from the Headteacher in advance except where no prior notice of an invitation is given. If the hospitality involves the Headteacher, they should seek written approval from one of the Executive Heads. The letter should record:

- (i) the date of the hospitality
- (ii) who it is given by/to
- (iii) the reason for the occasion and
- (iv) the costs

15. Gifts (See receipt of gifts & hospitality policy)

Headteachers, Teachers and Non-teaching Staff should not accept gratuities, gifts or favours from suppliers etc, that might impair or appear to impair professional judgement. It is recognised that there is a difference between pupil's gifts and those of suppliers.

16. Alcohol and Smoking

The consumption of alcohol within or directly around any Trust Academy site is not permitted except in those few exceptional circumstances outlined in the Expenses and Benefits Policy. This also applies to school events which may occur off site e.g. school trips.

Smoking is banned in all of the schools buildings and site and when on duty outside the school site. Staff should not smoke in close vicinity of the school perimeter or where they may be observed by students.

17. Sponsorship

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a school actively the basic conventions concerning the acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the school sponsors an event or service neither a member of school staff nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the Chair of Trustees.

Appendix 1

Financial interests

There can be no simple definition of what a “financial interest” is. The types of interest which would be relevant are listed below. However, the list is not intended to be exhaustive or inclusive. There may be other possible categories of interest.

Please note that:

- (a) a financial interest need not only be something to your financial advantage. It could involve losses as well as gains;
- (b) such interests should also include an interest of your spouse, partner or other members of your immediate family; and
- (c) if you are in any doubt it is wise to err on the side of caution and declare the interest.

Examples of possible financial interests:

1. A spare time employment that you have to declare for income tax purposes.
2. Any contract for goods, services or works between the trust and you (or a firm in which you are a partner, or a body corporate of which you are a director or in the securities of which you have a beneficial interest).
3. Land and buildings in which you have a substantial interest. This includes property from which you receive rent.
4. Securities where you have a substantial interest, i.e. you own shares or other securities in a company with a nominal value of more than £25,000 which is active in the Borough.

Non-financial interest

Private or personal non-financial interests are those which could reasonably be regarded as influencing an employee in a particular situation. They include the interests of family or friends and those arising from membership of, or association with, clubs, societies, trade unions, voluntary organisations etc. It is not possible to give a clear cut definition of what to include. However, a good test is to ask yourself the following question: “If other people knew the facts, might they reasonably think that I had an interest?”