



Walsall Council

Sandbank and Valley Nursery Schools Federation

Code of Conduct



September 2024

Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The governing body is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. The following code has been consulted upon with trade unions and is recommended for adoption by the governing body.
- 1.2 All employees are expected to follow the Code of Conduct throughout every aspect of their work. A high degree of trust is placed in school employees and it is acknowledged that they want to do their best and operate in a professional and appropriate manner. Employees have a duty to ensure that they operate legally, professionally and soundly. This Code is intended to provide a clear framework within which employees will work, in order to deliver the best that they can for the school and its pupils/students.
- 1.3 Employees need to recognise and be aware that a failure to meet appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct in compliance with the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

2. Purpose, Scope and Principles

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school employees are expected to observe, and the school should notify them of this code and the expectations therein. School employees are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school.
- 2.2 The Code of Conduct applies to:
 - all staff who are employed by the school, including the headteacher;
 - all casual and temporary staff, including agency staff;
 - all staff in units or bases that are attached to the school.
- 2.3 The Code of Conduct does not apply to:
 - staff who are centrally employed by the LA;
 - employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners).

(Such staff will be covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body)

3. Key Features of the Code

3.1 Employees are expected to:

- 3.1.1 do their jobs to the best of their ability, and in accordance with the provisions outlined in the school's Appraisal process and the September 2012 Teachers' Standards, and realise the importance of being skilled and experienced to achieve this;
- 3.1.2 carry out their work with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity;
- 3.1.3 be accountable for their actions;
- 3.1.4 comply with the law and all school policies and procedures;
- 3.1.5 not allow personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and to adhere to any statutory political restrictions;
- 3.1.6 respect our pupils/students, or their parents or carers and fellow employees and to use the highest level of integrity when dealing with them;
- 3.1.7 always be courteous, professional and helpful when dealing with other people, maintaining high levels of confidentiality;
- 3.1.8 use any financial resources given to them in a lawful manner, and not to use any schools facilities or school funds for their own purposes, unless they have obtained prior permission;
- 3.1.9 ensure that any outside interests don't conflict with those associated with work related duties and /or activities;
- 3.1.10 take care to tell their manager of details of any membership to any closed organisation that they might join, which require formal membership and commitment of allegiance (e.g. freemasons);
- 3.1.11 to disclose to their manager any relationships that they have with colleagues or potential job applicants;
- 3.1.12 be aware of and be willing to act in accordance with the schools guidelines on declaring and registering financial and non-financial interest, which includes making the school aware of any gifts, hospitality and benefits from third parties that are offered or received;

3.1.13 employees should not use information obtained during their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it to others who might use this in such a way, as this might lead to disciplinary action.

4. Setting an example

4.1 All employees who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Employees must, therefore, demonstrate, high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same. Employees must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what is and what is not acceptable

5. Dress

5.1 The school reserve the right to set minimum standards of dress for their employees. All employees are expected to dress properly and safely for the work they do and to meet the expectation of the school.

At Sandbank and Valley Nursery Schools Federation, Nursery staff are expected to dress in line with annual health and safety training. All body tattoos need to be covered during school hours.

6. Safeguarding Pupils/students

6.1 Employees have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional abuse; and
- neglect.

6.2 The duty of safeguarding pupil(s)/student(s) includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Senior Persons (DSP) for Child Protection. Employees are provided with personal copies

of the school's Child Protection Policy and Whistle blowing Procedure and they must be familiar with these documents.

- 6.3 Employees must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues. This includes action taken on social networking sites.
- 6.4 Employees must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

7. Pupils/Students Development

- 7.1 Employees must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well being and development of pupils/students. Employees must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students and they must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

8. Honesty and Integrity

- 8.1 It is expected that all employees maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

9. Relationships at Work

- 9.1 Employees may in the course of their duties enter into a personal relationship with a colleague. In the event of this happening, they should ensure that such a relationship does not conflict with their work activities or the school. In order to avoid accusations of a possible conflict, employees in this situation are strongly advised to disclose this relationship in confidence to the relevant manager(s)/chair of governors concerned. If an employee feels uncomfortable in broaching this issue with their manager then they should seek confidential and impartial advice from their trade union representative or a HR Advisor. Employees should be aware that in order to demonstrate transparency and integrity, there should be no line management responsibility and accountability

between the two employees, especially if the objectivity and professionalism of the manager could be called into question. Where this is not possible due to the size of the school for example, then the management arrangements must be professional, impartial and of the highest professional standards.

9.2 Employees must take reasonable care to avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct through relationships with pupils/students or their parents or carers, this includes actions taken by employees on social networking sites as this may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

9.3 Employees must maintain clear professional boundaries and confidentiality in such relationships at all times.

10. Conduct Outside of Work

10.1 Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school, or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or misuse of drugs, or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

10.2 Employees must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

10.3 Employees must take reasonable care when using social networking sites to ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct and the school's policy for Internet use. Failure to comply with such action could result in disciplinary action against them, not excluding dismissal.

10.4 Employees have a duty to ensure that the contents of such media;

- is not defamatory against the school, its employees, pupils/students or their parents/carers;
- does not bring the school into disrepute;
- does not damage the reputation of the school, the employee, or the community; and

- does not include pictures of children, employees at the school, without prior permission.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1 Where employees have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers, they must not disclose such information, except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupils/student.
- 11.2 All employees are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil's/students parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.
- 11.3 Employees have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person, any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Employees must **never** promise to a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

12. Equal Opportunities

- 12.1 All employees are expected to, in their actions:
- 12.1.1 give fair and equal consideration in the work they perform to all pupils/students and work colleagues, irrespective of the hours they work or their sex, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, age, trade union activity, expired offences (where legally admissible), political or religious belief;
- 12.1.2 not to make any judgements or actions that are influenced by any form of personal prejudice.

13. Dual employment

13.1 Employees may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school or its ethos, not be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. This applies to all employees including those on secondment, temporary assignment and working with voluntary organisations or trusts, or board members.

14. Health and Safety

14.1 Employees must by law take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other people, including their students/pupils or colleagues, who might be affected by anything they do at work.

14.2 Employees should not do anything intentionally or recklessly or take any action which might endanger themselves or others, or interfere with what is provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

14.3 Employees should make sure that they are familiar with their school's health and safety policy and act in accordance with it.

15. Alcohol and drugs

15.1 Consumption of alcohol is discouraged and must not at any time, impair the level of quality of an employee's work or cause a hazard to the health and safety of themselves, pupils/students or colleagues. Employees should not consume alcohol during normal working hours.

15.2 **At all times** employees are personally responsible for making sure that their consumption of alcohol does not in any way conflict with their responsibilities at work or conditions of employment.

15.3 Employees are required to have regard to the law in respect of recreational drugs. Use of recreational drugs must not at any time impair the level or quality of an employees work or cause a hazard to their health and the safety of themselves, pupils/students or colleagues.

- 15.4 Employees must not consume recreational drugs during working hours and/or at any time that could impact on working hours.
- 15.5 Inappropriate or excessive consumption of alcohol and or use and/or abuse of recreational drugs at work may lead to disciplinary action, not excluding dismissal. However, discretion will be given to employees that have a genuine drink/drug related problem and are receiving counselling and/or medical intervention for this.
- 15.6 Some prescription drugs may impair your performance at work due to their side effects. If you are taking prescription drugs, you must seek the advice of your doctor or other medical practitioner to determine whether it is safe and appropriate for you to come to work or undertake your normal duties. Employees should not drive or operate machinery etc if there is any risk that the prescription drugs may impair their ability to do so safely and effectively.

16. Handling Complaints

- 16.1 The school has a complaints procedure which deals with any issues that are not covered by other agreed procedures already in existence. Complaints should be dealt with promptly and in a courteous and sympathetic way. Employees who investigate complaints must make sure that any unexpected delays, difficulties or poor quality of service are explained to our customers as courteously and as sympathetically as possible. Serious complaints must be reported to Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors should the complaint be against the Headteacher.

17. Disclosure of wrongdoings - whistleblowing

- 17.1 Employees must advise their manager of any possible irregularity in procedures or their operation. In circumstances where employees are aware of or suspect that actions are being taken without proper or sufficient authority, there is a duty for them to report this to their manager or the manager of the employee taking the unauthorised action.

If the lack of authority is not remedied promptly this must be reported in writing to the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors, where the Headteacher has failed to take appropriate action.

17.2 Employees are protected in the disclosure or wrongdoings by an Act of Parliament called the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988*. This Act makes provision for the disclosures that may be protected, the circumstances in which such disclosures are protected. This matter is fully covered by the school's Whistleblowing Code.

17.3 Employees are recommended to advise their manager, in some instances where their prescription drugs may impact on their work.

18. Press and other media

18.1 Only certain employees are authorised to interact with and give information to the press and other media. If you are approached by the press or media, advise that it is not appropriate to give any information or comment on the matter and refer the enquiry to the head teacher immediately. Employees authorised to give information to the press and other media must give only the facts of a situation and must not express an opinion in relation to these facts.

18.2 Employees must not contact the press or other media unless specifically authorised to do so. Contacting the media without such permission may lead to disciplinary action, not excluding dismissal.