Diocese of Norwich
St Benet's
Multi Academy Trust

Diss & Scole Primary Academy Partnership

(Diss Infant Academy and Nursery, Diss CE Junior Academy and
Scole CE Primary Academy)

Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

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Our Christian Ethos and Values

Our academies are open to all and accepting of all regardless of faith. Our passion and ambition are to see children and young people in all our academies achieve excellent educational outcomes alongside developing and growing into their potential as individuals made in the image of God.

Our culture is one of high aspiration for all. This is rooted in our Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We have a desire to see our academies acknowledged as places of aspiration, high quality learning, achievement and hope making a significant contribution to the communities they serve.

All policies within St Benet's Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation for each academy it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governance Committee and the Headteacher. The Headteacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this Code is to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the standards of conduct required of them, and that our academies and associated places of work are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The Code applies to all staff and volunteers and will help everyone to understand how they can fulfil their obligations in performing their role. The term 'staff' encompasses employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, agency workers and teachers on ITT placement (this list is not exhaustive).

The term 'volunteers' includes all those freely giving of their time to contribute to the work of the Trust and its academies.

The Code itself does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, or worker's contract of engagement, and may be amended at any time in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions.

Breach of this Code, or the policies, standards and guidance listed below, may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal. This will apply and disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed on or external to the Trust's sites, and during or external to working hours.

It is acknowledged that this Code cannot cover every eventuality. As such the Trust will always have regard to the intent of this Code in its application to matters which may not be explicitly covered.

1.2 Key policies, standards and guidance

The following policies, standards and guidance set out specific requirements and responsibilities to be fulfilled by staff and volunteers, and each form part of this Code:

- S16 Safeguarding Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings February 2022
- NS14 Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations made against / low-level concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors
- NS02 Staff and volunteer ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- S09 Data Protection Policy
- S28 Speak Up Policy
- Part two of the Teacher's Standards: Personal and Professional Conduct
- HR24 Reference Policy

- S05 Health and Safety Policy
- S17 Finance Policy *with relation to Gifts and Hospitality*
- S06 Equality and Diversity Statutory Duties and Objectives
- The seven principles of public life, as listed below:

1. Selflessness
   Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity
   Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. Objectivity
   Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. Accountability
   Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness
   Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty
   Holders of public office should be truthful
7. Leadership
   Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. Other policies and guidance which provide direction as to responsibilities and standards of conduct required may be deemed relevant when considering whether there has been a breach of this Code.

The above policies, standards and guidance are regularly reviewed, disseminated to staff and volunteers and are readily available from the academy office, the Trust website and from the Human Resources Team.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to read and be familiar with the above policies, standards and guidance and this Code. It is the responsibility of Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, managers and the Human Resources Team, to ensure that they are communicated and readily available, and that any breaches are reported and managed appropriately.

2. Expected standards of personal and professional conduct

Our pupils/students, colleagues, the communities we serve and the wider public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all staff and volunteers. All staff and volunteers must uphold public trust in the Trust and our academies, and must always act with honesty, integrity, impartiality and in the interests of pupils/students.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality.
- Placing the well-being, safety and learning of children and young people at the centre of their work.
- Observing appropriate professional boundaries with pupils/students, colleagues and the wider Trust community, acting in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they were not doing so.
- Creating a safe learning and working environment, and not acting or omitting to act in a way which undermines this.
- Having high expectations for all pupils/students, a commitment to addressing underachievement, and working to help pupils/students progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances.
- Treating all pupils/students, colleagues and members of the Trust community fairly and with dignity and respect, taking their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and valuing diversity and individuality.
- Modelling the characteristics they are trying to inspire in pupils/students, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people.
- Reflecting on their own practice, developing their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapting appropriately to learn with and from colleagues.
- Responding sensitively to the differences in the backgrounds and circumstances of pupils/students, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in education.
- Seeking to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support learning and wellbeing in and outside of the academy.
- Ensuring that the same professional standards are always applied regardless of culture, disability, gender identity, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- 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.
- Not expressing personal beliefs in a way that may exploit the vulnerability of pupils/students or might lead them to break the law.

- Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Trust and its academies, and always acting within the statutory frameworks policies and guidance which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
- Not behaving in a manner or taking action which may bring the Trust or any of its academies into disrepute.

3. Standards of appearance

All staff and volunteers must maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene and appearance in their role, which promotes a positive and professional image and takes account of health and safety considerations. Clothing and footwear must be smart, safe and clean.

Staff and volunteers must ensure they are dressed in ways which:

- Are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive or revealing.
- Should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Should be religious and culturally sensitive, free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory.

Within these general guidelines, cultural, religious or traditional dress, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions will normally be acceptable at the discretion of the Headteacher or CEO.

Lanyards and identity cards, or identity labels, provided by the Trust must be worn whilst on Trust premises, and where clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes, it must be worn.

4. Safeguarding children and young people

4.1 Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone

The Trust and all the Trust's academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people, and we require all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to provide a safe learning environment, to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

In doing so they must familiarise themselves with and implement the requirements in:

- The relevant academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all school and college staff

- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings
- Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations made against / Low Level Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors
- Staff and volunteer ICT Acceptable Use Policy

4.2 Reporting allegations or low level concerns

Allegations of abuse or any low level concerns arising in relation to people working in, for or on behalf of an academy must immediately be reported and managed in accordance with the Trust's Statement of Procedures for Dealing with Allegations made against / Low Level Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors.

Allegations

Allegations which may meet the harm threshold are those which indicate that a member of staff, a person with permission to be on the premises or carrying out any activity on behalf of the academy or a volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children; including behaviour outside of work. This is known as transferable risk.

This applies to any child the member of staff or volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.

Employees subject to any external investigation regarding an allegation during their employment (for example police or LADO investigation) relating to their conduct or suitability to work with children must inform the relevant Headteacher, or for colleagues working central the HR Director immediately. Failure to inform, may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

Low level concerns

Low level concerns are concerns which may not meet the threshold set out above, but may indicate that an adult working in or on behalf of the academy may have acted in a way that, is inconsistent with this Code, including the requirements of Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings February 2022 (including inappropriate conduct outside of work)

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- Having favourites;
- Taking photographs of children, young people or vulnerable adults on their mobile phone;
- Engaging with children, young people or vulnerable adults on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

We also encourage staff and volunteers to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If unsure as to whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage you to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the member of staff or volunteer supported to correct it at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

4.3 Speak Up

The Trustees within the Trust are committed to the highest possible standards of transparency, probity and accountability. Concerns raised will be taken seriously and investigated in line with the speaking up process.

In line with this commitment, staff or volunteers with genuine concerns regarding any aspect of the Trust or an academy's work are encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns and can be confident that they can do so without fear of reprisal or victimisation. The Speak Up Policy provides a framework to be used by staff and volunteers to raise concerns, and to be used by the Trust in seeking to address and resolve them. It aims to ensure that any concerns are managed in a fair, consistent, prompt and supportive manner and provides channels for workers to pursue their concerns further if they are dissatisfied with the response of the Trust.

Should circumstances arise where workers have concerns in relation to poor or unsafe practice, or potential failures within an academy's safeguarding regime, which are such that immediate referral to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher, Local Authority Designated Officer or the Police is not required to safeguard children or young people, the Speak Up Policy provides both internal and external channels for them to raise their concerns.

5. ICT Acceptable Use

5.1 General

The Trust ICT Acceptable Use Policy sets out the standards of conduct required of all staff and volunteers when accessing and using the Trust's ICT facilities and systems, and where relevant the standards of conduct required external to the workplace. All staff and volunteers must comply with the requirements of the Policy, including those relating to the use of social media and personal devices, a summary of which is provided below. Please refer to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy for further guidance.

5.2 Responsible use of social media

All staff and volunteers must ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, and ensure that any communication with pupils/students, parents or carers through web based or telecommunication interactions take place within explicit professional boundaries. Staff and volunteers must only communicate with pupils/students, parents and carers using official Trust systems, and any such communication must be in a professional tone and manner.

Staff and volunteers must never send requests to or accept requests from pupils/students to communicate via any form of social media, and should not give their personal contact details to pupils/students for example e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers or details of web based identities. If pupils/students locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with a member of staff or volunteer, they should not respond and must report the matter to the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff and volunteers must also ensure that they do not bring the Trust or any academy into disrepute through their use of social media. As part of this staff and volunteers must ensure that appropriate privacy and security settings are in place. Staff and volunteers should be aware that even in circumstances where they consider their use of social media to be private, inappropriate actions may still amount to a conduct matter to be managed in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

5.3 Use of personal devices

Staff and volunteers must only communicate with pupils/students and parents or carers using official Trust systems, and any such communication must be in a professional tone and manner.

Staff and volunteers must ensure that if they bring any personal equipment on to a Trust site that there is no inappropriate content on it, and that it is not accessed by pupils/students at any time.

Any data, including images, which belong to the Trust or pupils/students, must only be stored on Trust owned equipment or systems, and must never be uploaded or downloaded to any personal device for any purpose except in a professional capacity by Governors, Trustees and Members.

Personal devices must never be used to take photos or videos of pupils/students, or to make contact with pupils/students, parents or carers in a professional capacity, unless required in an emergency, for example to make phone contact whilst on a trip or visit if the Trust equipment is not available.

Staff and volunteers should not use personal mobile phones during working hours and phones should be switched off or switched to 'silent mode'. Staff may use personal mobile phones during break periods if they are not on duty and are out of sight of pupils/students.

Staff and volunteers (except Governors, Trustees and Members) must not use their personal email addresses for work related matters, unless formally authorised by the Headteacher or CEO.

Where staff or volunteers have relationships with pupils/students, parents or carers by way of family connections or appropriate friendships external to the Trust context, they should declare this to the relevant Headteacher, or for colleagues working centrally the HR Director, to ensure that any personal communication is on record and cannot be misconstrued.

6. Confidentiality

All staff and volunteers are expected to comply with the relevant provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation, and will receive appropriate training and guidance. Any information they have access to, or are responsible for, must be managed appropriately and any requirements for confidentiality and security observed. Information must not be disclosed to any person or Authority, for example a parent or the Police, without observing the correct procedure for disclosure as set out in the Trust Data Protection Policy. Nothing shall prevent a person from disclosing information that they are entitled to disclose under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 as amended, provided that the disclosure is made in accordance with the provisions of that Act/s.

7. Health and safety

7.1 General

All staff and volunteers are required to exercise their duty of care by taking responsibility for their own health and safety, and the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their acts or failure to act. Full guidance regarding health and safety is set out in the Trust Health and Safety Policy, and in any risk assessments relevant to specific roles or circumstances. Both can be accessed

via managers, and staff and volunteers are required to comply with these and to use any protective clothing or equipment as instructed at all times.

7.2 No smoking or vaping policy

The Trust operates a no smoking or vaping policy. This applies to all Trust buildings and sites, and to those where Trust services are provided. Staff and volunteers should not allow pupils/students to see them smoking or vaping off site during breaks, or prior to starting or when ending work on site.

7.3 Misuse of alcohol or drugs

Staff and volunteers must never jeopardise their own health and safety or that of others, or bring the Trust or its academies into disrepute, through the misuse of alcohol or drugs, whether illegal or legal, including prescribed medication. Where alcohol or drug misuse is identified staff and volunteers will be offered appropriate support, and individual circumstances will be considered with respect to any disciplinary action that may be taken. Staff and volunteers where the Trust have evidence to suggest that they may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on the Trust's premises, should contact their named HR Officer immediately for advice. Staff and volunteers in this situation may be asked if they provide their voluntary consent to take a drugs/alcohol test due to the Trust's concerns, which would be provided by the Trust.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to equality and values diversity, and as such is committed to fulfilling its Equality Duty obligations. The Trust expects all employees to share this commitment, and to comply with the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

9. Monitoring

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for monitoring the implementation, use and effectiveness of this Code of Conduct.