

POLICY:

Staff Code of Conduct

Review

Approving Body:	Executive Leadership Team	Effective Date:	August 2026
Review Cycle:	Annual	Next Review Due:	July 2027

This policy is statutory and applies to all the schools in the Trust.

Where this policy reflects statutory requirements, compliance is mandatory. Failure to comply may result in escalation in line with Trust governance and accountability arrangements.

Contents

Contents.....	2
1) Purpose.....	3
2) Applicability	3
3) Roles & Responsibilities	3
4) General Conduct	3
5) Gifts & Hospitality	4
6) Financial & Personal Interests	4
7) Other Employment.....	4
8) Confidentiality	4
9) Use of Mobile Phones	5
10) Recruitment & Appointment	5
11) Dress & Presentation	5
12) Safeguarding.....	5
13) Relationships with Parents & Carers	5
14) Relationships with Line Manager.....	5
15) Working with School Governors	6
16) Working as Part of a Whole-School Team	6
17) Respect for Diversity & Promoting Equality	6
18) Working with Money	6
19) Using Trust Resources & Premises.....	7
20) Working Safely	7
21) Protecting the School & its Standards	7
Appendix 1: Teachers' Standards (Personal & Professional Conduct)	8

1) Purpose

- 1.1 The conduct, behaviour and practice of all Trust staff will have an influence on the development of children and young people. This code provides clear guidance on what is acceptable conduct and what is not for staff working within the Trust.

2) Applicability

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all staff working within the Trust.

3) Roles & Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Headteacher and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring all staff in the school are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct and for providing support and encouragement to ensure staff maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, accountability and openness.
- 3.2 All staff are responsible for reading and adhering to the Code of Conduct and for reflecting on their own conduct and practice and ensuring they meet the standards required of them.
- 3.3 Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken. Serious breaches may result in dismissal from the Trust's employment.

Standards

The following standards apply to all Trust staff.

4) General Conduct

- 4.1 All employees are expected to apply the values of the Trust in their conduct at work, always demonstrating honesty and integrity. In general terms, the Trust expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, governors, other bodies or agencies, or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of Trust staff. Any complaints about inappropriate conduct will be dealt with fairly and reasonably, using the agreed procedures.
- 4.2 We must be mindful of the reputation of the Trust and the danger of employees being involved in inappropriate communication. Teachers and others working with children also need to be seen to be acting appropriately. Employees should never be connected with pupils on social networking sites and that they never identify their school on such sites (LinkedIn exempt from this instruction). Where there are personal connections with individual pupils outside school, connections via social media may be acceptable, but all must be disclosed to the Headteacher, and employee profiles must not be accessible by anyone beyond their personal connections. Employees must set the highest level of security on all social media, which is for personal use. All school-related social media must be approved and overseen by the Headteacher. This may be delegated to an appropriate member of staff. The Trust has its own social media for professional use which is managed by approved employees only. School email systems and other methods of communication within our network are professional and should be used accordingly. Staff in doubt should ask the Pastoral Deputy or Headteacher for advice and should always report inappropriate behaviour from pupils on networking sites to that same Deputy or Headteacher.
- 4.3 All employees are expected to use their professional expertise and judgement to put the well-being, development and progress of pupils first, within the context of their role.
- 4.4 All individuals associated with the Trust have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. All employees are therefore expected to treat colleagues, pupils, parents, governors, trustees, school partners, other bodies or agencies, or members of the community with dignity and respect.
- 4.5 Employees should not use their position within the Trust for any purpose other than Trust business.
- 4.6 The Trust has an agreed procedure for the management of staff discipline. All employees should make themselves aware of this procedure and the disciplinary rules which apply in the Trust.
- 4.7 All employees are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. Where an employee breaks the law outside working time and the offence is one which could damage public confidence or has a direct effect on work, the employee may be subject to the disciplinary procedure.
- 4.8 Employees are required to adhere to all health and safety policies and practices (see Working Safely – section 20).
- 4.9 The Trust operates a non-smoking policy. As such, smoking or vaping are not allowed within the schools or school grounds.
- 4.10 Staff must adhere to the Trust's alcohol and substance misuse policy.

- 4.11 Where an employee is taking prescribed drugs, he/she should inform his/her line manager where this may affect behaviour and/or performance at work.
- 4.12 It is good practice for employees to inform their line manager if they are suffering from a medical condition, or have personal circumstances, which may adversely affect performance at work.

5) Gifts & Hospitality

- 5.1 Trust employees may from time to time be offered gifts or hospitality, for example from pupils or parents. The following advice should guide decisions on receipt of such gifts/hospitality. Please refer to the Gifts & Hospitality Policy for guidance. If you are in any doubt about the acceptability of a gift/offer of hospitality, please consult your line manager/Headteacher.

6) Financial & Personal Interests

- 6.1 Trust employees must always be seen to be acting fairly and impartially and personal needs or interests, or those of family or friends, must not influence actions or decisions.
- 6.2 Where an employee has a friend, associate or relative who is providing goods or services to the Trust or one of its schools, of the kind the employee deals with directly or monitors in the course of his/her work, this should be disclosed. Disclosures must be made in writing to the CEO/Headteacher, who will advise any other staff who may need to know.
- 6.3 Off-duty hours are generally the personal concern of the employees, though employees must not engage in any outside activity which may conflict with the interests of the Trust or could damage the confidence of the community in the Trust or the role of the employee.
- 6.4 Employees should register with the CEO/Headteacher any membership of an organisation, not open to the public which has secrecy about rules, membership and/or conduct (e.g. Freemasons).

7) Other Employment

- 7.1 Members of school management teams must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointments without the written consent of the Headteacher. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 7.2 Other employees may take up additional employment without consent providing the employment does not conflict with the interests of the school or in any way weaken the confidence of the community in the individual or Trust.
- 7.3 Where an employee undertakes additional employment, he/she must notify his/her line manager of the number of hours he/she is working per week, to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

8) Confidentiality

- 8.1 Confidential information must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know. Paper-based and electronic information must be stored securely and confidentially, with access limited to those who have a right to view it.
- 8.2 Employees must not disclose any information that is confidential or that, if it were made public, may lead to a breakdown in the trust and confidence the school is required to provide to the community. It may be necessary to discuss confidential information with colleagues. Where this is the case, the discussions must take place in private.
- 8.3 Employees must not disclose any information about the Trust/school/pupils to the press or other media unless expressly authorised to do so by the CEO/Headteacher.
- 8.4 Employees must not disclose information about the Trust, school or its pupils on social networking sites or such similar sites. Employees should consider the information they include on these sites and how the information may impact the Trust and its reputation. Inappropriate disclosure of information may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. *See point 4.2 for professional conduct relating to social media for all staff.*
- 8.5 External storage devices such as memory sticks and external hard drives are not permitted for use within our IT systems. There are some outlying situations where this may be appropriate to an employee's role, and as such they can make a request via the IT team, for approval by the Data Protection Officer and CEO/Headteacher. If approved, they are required to complete and sign the appropriate form, consenting to the terms of use. The device will be processed by the IT team and encrypted before it is approved for use in the system. If any device is misplaced or stolen, this must be reported to the Data Protection Officer immediately: dpo@equinoxlearningtrust.co.uk.

9) Use of Mobile Phones

- 9.1 The use of mobile phones by employees when on site must be restricted to private spaces. Use of mobile phones is not permitted in public pupil places such as in the classrooms, corridors, around the buildings both inside and out, or at school events. In situations where employees may need their mobiles close to hand for individual personal/emergency reasons, this may be authorised by their line manager. Some roles in school require the use of mobile phones throughout the day, and these will be supplied or approved by the school.

10) Recruitment & Appointment

- 10.1 Employees involved in recruitment and appointments must apply the Trust's recruitment and selection processes and ensure fairness and equality is always applied.
- 10.2 Where an employee is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, he/she must advise his/her line manager or CEO/Headteacher where he/she is closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g. close friend, relative).
- 10.3 Employees applying for a post or other work-related opportunity within the school (e.g. promotion, secondment) must not seek the help or influence of school governors/trustees.

11) Dress & Presentation

- 11.1 The Trust expects its employees to dress in a formal manner which creates a positive and professional impression. Clothes should be modest, appropriate to the job, and should not create a hazard for the employee (no flipflops or open back shoes). Questions can be raised with the Health & Safety Manager on the school site, and concerns should be raised with the CEO/Headteacher directly.
- 11.2 Employees are expected to maintain a professional standard of personal presentation. Hair colour, tattoos, piercings, nails, and other aspects of appearance should be appropriate to the employee's role and the school environment. Tattoos should be covered where reasonably practicable for formal meetings with external stakeholders. Any questions regarding appropriate presentation should be discussed with the Headteacher or CEO, as appropriate. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when required.

12) Safeguarding

- 12.1 All employees are responsible for following and adhering to the Trust's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 12.2 All employees are expected to use the appropriate channels, as set out in the relevant procedures, to raise concerns about the practice of others if there is suspicion their conduct has a negative impact on learning or causes harm to pupils.
- 12.3 Employees must inform the CEO/Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable if they are subject to a criminal investigation or have received a conviction, caution or have been banned from working with children.

13) Relationships with Parents & Carers

- 13.1 Employees should strive to establish productive relationships with parents and carers.
- 13.2 This includes providing parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress, involving parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education, considering parents and carers' views and perspectives and following the school policies on communication and involvement with parents and carers.
- 13.3 Where an interaction with a parent or carer becomes aggressive or offensive, the interaction should be ended politely and firmly, with assistance summoned where required. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any contact with parents/carers where aggression or violence is anticipated, and the appropriate lone working procedures must be instigated.

14) Relationships with Line Manager

- 14.1 Employees and line managers should strive to maintain co-operative and effective working relationships. Relationships should be courteous, reasonable, and fair at all times.
- 14.2 Employees should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions given by the line manager to the best of their ability.
- 14.3 Line managers should exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive, and fair way, and in accordance with school policies, contractual obligations and national standards.

- 14.4 Line managers should use the Trust performance management frameworks to appraise the performance of direct reports and provide feedback. Line managers should provide honest, accurate, and justifiable comments when providing feedback, and encourage staff to undertake training and development opportunities, within the context of the school's needs and budget.
- 14.5 Line managers must ensure direct reports are aware of and have access to the relevant policies and procedures which affect their work.

15) Working with School Governors

- 15.1 When working with governors or dealing with enquiries from governors, all employees are expected to be courteous and efficient. Employees should expect similar levels of courtesy from governors.
- 15.2 Employees should use the appropriate school procedure (e.g. Grievance procedure) to deal with any work-related personal issues and should not engage governors in such issues unless it is in accordance with the relevant procedure.
- 15.3 Similarly, employees should not use governors to bypass formal school procedures in any way, for example, to influence the outcome of a disciplinary matter. This does not affect the rights of trade union representatives to take up matters on behalf of their members through appropriate channels, or for governors to be formally involved in school procedures where appropriate – for example, acting as a member of a governor disciplinary appeal panel.
- 15.4 Employees must not try to influence governors prior to any appointment/decision. This excludes providing views to governors as part of an information gathering or consultation exercise.

16) Working as Part of a Whole-School Team

- 16.1 Employees should endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all Trust colleagues and to participate in whole-Trust development and improvement activities. We are a team.
- 16.2 Employees should uphold all Trust policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the life or running of the Trust in an appropriate and responsible way.
- 16.3 Employees should recognise the important role of the Trust in the life of the community and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.
- 16.4 Employees should cooperate with other professionals in the children's workforce, establishing effective and productive relationships with other professional colleagues.
- 16.5 Employees should always ensure they act within their sphere of their own competence and responsibilities and seek clarification where this is needed.

17) Respect for Diversity & Promoting Equality

- 17.1 All employees must act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers, and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, or belief.
- 17.2 Employees must take responsibility for understanding and complying with school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access, and bullying.
- 17.3 Employees should help create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development, and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.
- 17.4 Employees should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from their line manager or CEO/Headteacher where issues are identified.
- 17.5 Employees should always strive to uphold our values and tackle unkindness between pupils during the school day and school activities, including the classroom and moving around the school sites.

18) Working with Money

- 18.1 Employees receiving or responsible for school money need to take particular care and must always adhere to the appropriate financial procedures (FMSIS).
- 18.2 Employees submitting claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure must ensure the correct procedures are followed; the details of the claim are within set limits and can be substantiated (e.g. with receipts).

19) Using Trust Resources & Premises

- 19.1 Trust and school equipment should not be used for excessive personal use unless authorised by the CEO/Headteacher. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, computers, and premises.
- 19.2 Trust ICT systems, particularly email and internet, should only be used for professional purposes. ICT passwords should be always kept confidential and not disclosed to any other individual.

20) Working Safely

- 20.1 Both the Trust and its employees are responsible for ensuring a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.
- 20.2 Actions or omissions of any individual that place others in danger may lead to disciplinary action.
- 20.3 Employees are expected to:
- Adhere to the Trust's health and safety policy and rules
 - Advise the Headteacher/line manager/appropriate person of any unsafe situations or practices
 - Take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of other employees, pupils, and any other users of the school premises
 - Wear any safety clothing/equipment and ensure all pupils are wearing and use appropriate equipment
 - Report any injuries, accidents or near misses to the appropriate responsible person
 - Report incidents of abusive/aggressive or bullying/threatening behaviour that is experienced or witnessed to the appropriate responsible person
 - Advise their line manager when taking any medication which could affect the ability to work safely
 - Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene.

21) Protecting the School & its Standards

- 21.1 Where an employee has reason to suspect colleagues, senior managers, or governors are acting improperly, the employee should report these suspicions to the CEO/Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the suspicions concern the Headteacher). The employee will be assured that the concerns, when made in good faith, will be heard without fear of victimisation, discrimination, or disadvantage in accordance with the confidential reporting code.
- 21.2 Improper conduct can cover a wide range, including financial irregularity, abuse of pupils, abuse of power or position, neglect of duty, discrimination, bullying or harassment in accordance with the Whistleblowing procedure.

Appendix 1: Teachers' Standards (Personal & Professional Conduct)

Teachers are expected to comply with the full range of standards. The below sets out the expectations in relation to personal and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#).

- 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 pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and always
 - observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' 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 personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' 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 and punctuality.
- Teachers must understand, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.