



Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable IT Use Policy

Adopted By: Board of Trustees

Date: July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable IT Use Policy

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| Date of Issue: | July 2025 |
| Policy applies to: | All staff employed by the Wessex Multi-School Trust. |
| Policy Version Number: | 06 |
| Purpose of the document: | To provide clear guidance and expectations in relation to staff conduct when working within the Trust. |
| Summary of the main points: | <p>The document provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed core principles of the staff code of conduct 2. Expectations of conduct and behaviour of all adults working in the Trust. 3. Updated information from Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). 4. Guidance on the acceptable use of IT for staff. |
| Approved by: | Board of Trustees |
| Reviewer: | Laura Cheney, Director of Education |
| Summary of amendments: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reference to KCSiE updated to 2024 2. Reference to academies changed to schools 3. Links added to additional guidance 4. Reference to Local Governing Body changed to School Governance Committee |
| Next review due: | July 2026 |

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Staff Code of Conduct

To be read in conjunction with the national guidance: 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings – February 2022'.

1. Definition

- 1.1. References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' should therefore be read to mean **any pupil** at the education establishment.
- 1.2. References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in an educational establishment, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.
- 1.3. The term 'allegation' means where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
 - 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 **or**
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- 1.4. Throughout this document, in the case of WMAT Central Team staff, references to Headteacher/Head of School should be replaced with CEO.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Schools have a legal duty to create and maintain a safe learning environment for children. A staff code of conduct is a **mandatory** requirement as described in the DfE statutory guidance: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024' (page 108).

[Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

- 2.2. The Trust seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. The following code draws together existing laws, regulations and conditions of service designed to protect the interests of staff and volunteers and the children with whom they work, and this has been agreed following consultation with recognised trade unions and is recommended for adoption.
- 2.3. Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

3. Purpose and Scope

- 3.1. All staff and volunteers working in a school setting have a legal and moral duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Staff should ensure they do not put themselves in situations in which allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour could be made.
- 3.2. This code applies to all adults working in schools whatever their position, role or responsibilities.
- 3.3. All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding, which should be explained as part of staff induction and through regular staff training.
- 3.4. The code should be read in conjunction with the relevant statutory and other guidance documents issued nationally or by the DfE and Home Office as well as other related Trust policies (see **Appendix 1** of this policy).
- 3.5. This code cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to show the standard expected of staff but it does not replace the general requirements of the law.
- 3.6. All staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this code, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct which this code supplements.

[Teachers' Standards \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- 3.7. It is recognised that the vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in their care. Achieving these aims is not always straightforward, as much relies on child and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. This code aims to reduce the risk of that.

4. Core Principles

- 4.1. The welfare of the children is paramount.
- 4.2. Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should seek to avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- 4.3. Staff are expected to maintain a professional standard of conduct, not only in regard to interactions with children in their educational establishment, but to extend this courtesy to their colleagues, parents and visitors of the establishment.
- 4.4. Staff should dress appropriately at all times for the tasks they undertake and ensure they promote a positive and professional image.
- 4.5. Staff should apply the expected professional standards of behaviour and not discriminate against anyone in relation to their age, disability, sex or gender reassignment, marriage

or civil partnerships (in particular with adults in contact with the establishment), pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

- 4.6. Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to care for children.
- 4.7. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct, prohibition from teaching by the National College of Teaching & Leadership (NCTL).
- 4.8. Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children.
- 4.9. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident which may give rise to concern.
- 4.10. Records should be made of any incident and decision made or where further actions have been agreed, in accordance with Trust policies and confidentiality.
- 4.11. All staff should know their school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with local child protection arrangements, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, whistleblowing procedures and their Local Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.
- 4.12. Staff should be aware of and comply with the Trust's financial and administrative regulations and any other procedure manuals.

5. Conduct and Behaviour

- 5.1. All staff who work in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to individuals in their care and so must adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within and outside of the workplace or the safety and/or welfare of children and young people.
- 5.2. Staff should be aware that it is a criminal offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003: abuse of a position of trust) to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.
- 5.3. Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct in accordance with the minimum professional Teaching Standards.
- 5.4. Staff should never make (or encourage others to make) comments, either to the children colleagues, parents or visitors of the establishment, that are intended, or can be interpreted to be, unprofessional, demeaning or humiliating.
- 5.5. Staff should not use physical force as a form of punishment.

- 5.6. Staff should always adhere to the Trust's policies on Behaviour Management and Use of Reasonable Force. Staff should also adhere to their school's local policies on these matters.
- 5.7. 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.

6. Equality Issues

- 6.1. All staff should adhere to the Trust's Equal Opportunities Statement, in addition to the requirements of the law.
- 6.2. All adults and children at the Trust have a right to be treated at all times with fairness, equality and without discrimination.

7. Employment Matters

- 7.1. All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes should ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit, without discrimination and in accordance with the Trust's recruitment and selection policy and procedure.
- 7.2. Any staff involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit.
- 7.3. No member of staff should be involved in any appointment or decision relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.
- 7.4. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Headteacher/Head of School or the Chair of Governors (if the Headteacher/Head of School).

8. Public Duty and Private Interest

- 8.1. Staff should not put themselves in a position where their duty to the Trust and their private interests conflict.

9. Other Employment/Private Work

- 9.1. Any external work undertaken must not bring the Trust into disrepute or conflict with the Trust's interest.
- 9.2. Any copyright created by a member of staff during their employment with the Trust becomes the property of the Trust.

10. Safeguarding

- 10.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- physical abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - neglect
- 10.2. The duty to safeguard children and young people includes the duty to report child welfare concerns to their school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL),
- 10.3. Staff should be aware of and adopt the recommended procedures and best practice guidance outlined in the national [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings](#)
- 10.4. Staff should be aware of and follow the statutory responsibilities outlined in [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)
- 10.5. Staff should be aware of the risks to children from radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism as outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance: [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice**

- (i) This document will be used to support the Code of Conduct and as such may be referred to in any disciplinary proceedings.
- (ii) Staff should read this document in conjunction with this code.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

- (i) This document sets out the statutory duties schools and schools must follow and includes guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. It is advised that this is read alongside [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)
- (ii) Staff should ensure they understand and are familiar with their responsibilities and where this includes mandatory reporting expectations they understand their role and any locally agreed procedures for reporting, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- (iii) Staff should be aware of the personal reporting duty with regard to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM). Supplementary to Keeping Children Safe in Education, staff can obtain further guidance in the '**Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information**' document: [FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf](#)
- (iv) Staff should refer any concerns about another member of staff to the Headteacher/Head of School, or if the concern is about the Headteacher/Head of School to the Chair of Governors or equivalent.

- (v) Staff should raise concerns of poor or unsafe practice or potential failures in safeguarding, using the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

- (vi) **Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

Being over-friendly with children

Having favourites

Taking photographs of children on a personal device

Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen

Using inappropriate language

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

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

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed and the staff member 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.

- **Prevent Duty**

- (i) Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff must have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'
- (ii) Staff should refer any concerns regarding radicalisation to their school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior member of staff, following their school's and/or Trust's normal safeguarding procedures.
- (iii) Relevant staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme, a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

- (iv) Staff should ensure they have undertaken some form of Prevent awareness training

11. Financial inducements, gifts, hospitality and sponsorship

- 11.1. Staff should not seek or receive preferential rates for themselves by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the Trust.
- 11.2. Staff should ensure that gifts are declared if they are received.
- 11.3. Where staff provide gifts, they should ensure they are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.

12. Use of Trust Time and Facilities

- 12.1. The Trust's property and facilities (e.g. stationary, computers, photocopiers, mobile phones) may only be used for Trust business unless permission for their private use has been granted.

13. Publication of Books/Articles

- 13.1. Staff must consult with the Headteacher/Head of School/CEO before publishing books, articles, letters, dissertations, etc where they are described as holding an appointment at the Trust.

14. Disciplinary Action

- 14.1 All staff should be aware that a failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

15. Monitoring and review

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- 15.2 The School Governance Committee of each Trust school will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguarding children and deal with any concerns.

16. Online Safety: Staff, Governors and Volunteers Acceptable Use Agreement

- 16.1.** This Acceptable Use Agreement is part of the school's Online Safety Policy and must therefore be adhered to at all times. The agreement is intended to ensure that:
- All staff, governors and volunteers will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other communications technologies for educational and personal use.
 - The school ICT systems and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk.

- Staff, governors and volunteers are protected from potential risk in their use of ICT in their everyday work.

17. Acceptable Use Agreement

17.1. I understand that I must use school ICT systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the ICT systems and other users. I recognise the value of the use of ICT for enhancing learning. I will, where possible, educate the young people in my care in the safe use of ICT and embed e-safety in my work with young people.

17.2. For my professional and personal safety:

- I understand that the school will monitor the use of the ICT systems, email and other digital communications.
- I understand that the rules set out in this agreement also apply to use of school ICT systems (e.g. laptops, email etc) out of school.
- I understand that the school ICT systems are primarily intended for educational use.
- I will not disclose my username or password to anyone else, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password.
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incidents I become aware of, to the e-safety co-ordinator.

17.3. I will be professional in my communications and actions when using school ICT systems:

- I will not access, copy, remove or otherwise alter any other user's files, without their express permission.
- I will not delete any resources produced for whole department use unless they have been updated.
- I will communicate with others in a professional manner. I will not use aggressive or inappropriate language.
- I will ensure that when I take and/or publish images of others I will do so with their permission and in accordance with the school's policy on the use of digital/video images. I will not use my personal equipment to record these images, unless I have permission to do so. Where these images are published (e.g. on the school website) it will not be possible to identify by name, or other personal information, those who are featured.
- I will not use social networking sites in school.
- I will only communicate with students and parents/carers using official school systems. Any such communication will be professional in tone and manner. I will not give students my personal email address.
- I will only give students my personal mobile phone number if authorised (for example on a school trip) and will tell students to delete any staff numbers once they are no longer needed.
- I will not contact any students via a social networking site and will ensure that there is nothing inappropriate on the public profile of my social networking site.

- I will not engage in any on-line activity that may compromise my professional responsibilities.

17.4. The school has the responsibility to provide safe and secure access to technologies and ensure the smooth running of the school:

- When I use my personal handheld/external devices (tablets/laptops/mobile phones/USB devices etc.) in school, I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment and will ensure that any such devices are protected by up to date anti-virus software and are free from viruses.
- I will not open any attachments to emails, unless the source is known and trusted, due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes.
- I will ensure that my data is regularly backed up.
- I will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal (child sexual abuse images, criminally racist material, adult pornography covered by the Obscene Publications Act) or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others.
- I will not try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.
- I will not try (unless I have permission) to make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work.
- I will not install or attempt to install programmes of any type on any machine, or store programmes on a computer, nor will I try to alter computer settings without the permission of the Network Manager.
- I will not disable or cause any damage to school equipment, or the equipment belonging to others.
- I understand that the Trust Data Protection Policy requires that any staff or student data to which I have access, will be kept private and confidential, except when it is deemed necessary that I am required by law or by school policy to disclose such information to an appropriate authority.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.
- I will encrypt any data that is determined to be personal or sensitive in nature if transporting it (e.g. on a USB stick).
- I will not store any data which includes details of students on any personal devices.

17.5. When using the internet in my professional capacity or for school sanctioned personal use:

- I will ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work.
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not download or distribute copies (including music and videos).

17.6. I understand that I am responsible for my actions in and out of school:

- I understand that this Acceptable Use Policy applies not only to my work and use of school ICT equipment in school, but also applies to my use of school ICT systems

and equipment out of school and my use of personal equipment in school or in situations related to my employment by the school.

- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy there will be a referral to Governors and/or the Local Authority and in the event of illegal activities the involvement of the police.

Declaration of receipt

I confirm that I have read the **Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, February 2022** and understand that any unlawful or unsafe behaviour could lead to appropriate legal or disciplinary action being taken.

Name: *(please print)*:

Signature:Date:

Please return this slip to your Line Manager/Headteacher/Head of School as soon as possible

APPENDIX 1

Policies and other documents to be considered and read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct (listed in alphabetical order):

| |
|---|
| Policy/Procedure/Guidance |
| Dress Code Guidance (Appendix 2) |
| Allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers |
| Safeguarding Policy |
| Data Protection Policy |
| Disciplinary Policy and Procedure |
| Drugs and Alcohol Policy |
| Equal Opportunities Policy |
| E- Safety/Internet Use/Social Networking/ICT Policies |
| Teachers' Standards |
| Guidance for Safer Working Practice* national guidance for those working with children and young people in Education Settings. Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk) |
| Health and Safety Policy |
| Intimate Care |
| Keeping Children Safe in Education*- DfE statutory guidance Link: Keeping children safe in education 2024 |
| Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation procedural information* Link: FGM Mandatory Reporting - procedural information nov16 FINAL.pdf |
| Use of Positive Force |
| Prevent Duty Guidance* Link: Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK |
| Recruitment and Selection Policy |
| School Record Keeping Policy |
| Whistleblowing Policy |

*It is expected that staff will adhere to the statutory duties and/or best practice outlined within these documents as applicable to their role and responsibilities.