

# Confidential

## CODE OF CONDUCT

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sapientia Education Trust will be referred to as the '**Trust**' throughout this policy.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct is intended as a guide to all Trust staff, contractors and volunteers. The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of conduct expected when within, or representing, the Trust. This Code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff. It is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary.
- 1.3 The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, contractors, and volunteers to share this commitment.
- 1.4 For ease of expression, the Code of Conduct uses the term "member of staff" to indicate all who work within the Trust, either on a paid or voluntary basis. For clarification, the Code of Conduct applies to:
  - All employed members of staff;
  - All volunteers supporting the work of the Trust, whether appointed directly or via a third party; and
  - All contractors and/or employees of contractors, including agency workers.
- 1.5 The Trust Trustees and school Governors should refer to the Code of Conduct for Governors.
- 1.6 It takes in the requirements of the law and defines the required levels of professionalism to ensure the wellbeing of the school and its pupils.
- 1.7 This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgment and act in the best interests of pupils/students and the Trust.
- 1.8 Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in action being taken under the Trust disciplinary procedure, including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 1.9 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
  - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
  - [Teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#)
  - [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings'](#).
  - [SET EDI Policy Dec 23.pdf](#);
  - [SET - Disciplinary Policy 2021.pdf](#);
  - [SET Grievance Policy 2022.pdf](#);
  - [SET - Relationship Policy April 2024.pdf](#);
  - [SET Financial Rules and Procedures - Sep 2024.pdf](#);
  - [SET - Whistleblowing Policy.pdf](#); and

- [SET Driving for Work Policy May 2024 .pdf.](#)

## 2. General Principles

- 2.1 The Trust recognises staff's individual rights to privacy and a personal life and tries to balance this with the need to protect the interests of the Trust and its staff.
- 2.2 Staff should not put themselves in a position where the Trusts interests and their own personal interests' conflict.
  - This includes behaviour which would undermine the Trusts confidence or trust in them. For example, inappropriate posts on social media could damage the Trusts reputation.
- 2.3 Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all of their professional relationships.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure the Trust is compliant with the DPA and GDPR. Please see the Trust Data Protection Policy and local school Data Protection policies for further details.
  - For further information refer to the [Data Protection Act \('DPA'\) 2018](#) and [General Data Protection Regulations \('GDPR'\) 2018](#).
- 2.5 Media: Other than on matters of publicity, only the Trust CEO or deputy CEO is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the school to members of the press or broadcast media.

## 3. Health and Safety

- 3.1 Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions.
- 3.2 All staff must comply with the Trusts Health and Safety Procedures, relevant legislation and regulations and complete mandatory training.

## 4. Equality and Diversity

- 4.1 The Trust seeks to promote inclusivity and diversity in the workplace and create a working environment where all staff feel respected and supported in the workplace, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment or identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic background, culture, sexual orientation, religion or belief, sex or any other factor.

- 4.2 Staff must at all times adhere to the Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and treat pupils, parents and members of staff as well as external stakeholders in accordance with this policy.
- 4.3 The Trust has zero tolerance to bullying and harassment. Disciplinary action will be taken against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or causes people to feel threatened.

## 5. Dress and Appearance

- 5.1 Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (February 2022) states; *that staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role (paragraph 8).*
- 5.2 Members of staff must adopt appropriate, professional dress during the school day and set a good example to students concerning behaviour and appearance at all times.
- 5.3 Examples of appropriate dress includes:
  - Trousers/Skirt/Dress and appropriately smart top/blouse, jumper, Shirt. Staff should not be wearing denim, jeans, joggers, trainers, leggings; and
  - Appropriate footwear should be worn. For more information, please refer to the [Health and Safety - SET Footwear assessment May 2024.pdf](#)
- 5.4 The Trust recognises that some schools may need to adopt their own uniform policy in accordance with their setting. The required dress outlined is the minimum requirement.
- 5.5 The Trust values and welcomes the diversity of our workforce. We will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity.
- 5.6 The Trust expects employees to conform to health and safety clothing requirements and to wear any uniform issued.
- 5.7 If you have any queries, please discuss with your line manager in the first instance.

## 6. Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

- 6.1 Members of staff have a duty of care to all pupils and students within the Trust and must act at all times in a manner which safeguards and promotes their physical, emotional and moral welfare.

- 6.2 All members of staff must be familiar with and act in accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) and [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#).
- 6.3 Members of staff of the Trust must not seek physical, emotional or sexual gratification from their relationships with pupils or students nor give the impression that they may be doing so. Staff must exercise care in using language or exhibiting behaviour which may be misconstrued as inappropriate and must avoid situations where their integrity may appear compromised.
- 6.4 Members of staff of the Trust must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Trust staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Members of staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 6.5 It is understood that some adults within the Trust have their own children who attend their school. Such staff will inevitably have interactions with students and families on a personal basis and so may face potential points of conflict with this Code. Staff must exercise their professional judgement in this situation and, if in any doubt, they should seek advice from the relevant Headteacher.
- 6.6 Physical contact with students must be kept to a minimum and must only take place where it is necessary in the discharge of the duties of a member of staff. Except in cases of emergency, the reason for physical contact should be explained to pupils and students before it takes place and consent should be obtained.
- 6.7 Law forbids physical punishment of students. Minimum necessary force may be used in a situation to protect a student, member of staff or any other person from physical harm. Any incident where force has been used must be reported in full to the Headteacher as soon as reasonably possible.
- 6.8 Any member of staff who believes that a student may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse (whether by an adult or child) or of neglect has a legal duty to report the matter to the school's safeguarding team. For this reason, members of staff should not give assurances of confidentiality when counselling students.
- 6.9 These provisions apply equally in the case of all students whether or not they are legally adults. They also apply in any situation where a member of staff may be working with vulnerable adults.

- 6.10 It is not unusual for students or sometimes parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher. In a case where the Headteacher is involved, it must be reported to the CEO.
- 6.11 Staff should be mindful of [S16 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003](#). This provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. a teacher) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is not unwelcome.

## 7. Professional Conduct

- 7.1 Members of staff must understand and comply with the "[Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in an Educational Setting](#)".
- 7.2 Teachers are required to comply with the [Teachers Standards](#), in particular Part 2 on Personal and Professional Standards.
- 7.3 Members of staff must discharge their duties to the best of their abilities and using their best endeavours, remembering that the interests of students are paramount. Members of staff must cooperate with colleagues and other individuals as required as well as contributing to the creation of a pleasant and productive working environment. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any nature is entirely unacceptable.
- 7.4 Members of staff must not demean or undermine students, their parents, carers or colleagues, or act towards them in a way that could be construed as discriminatory in relation to any protected characteristic: sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, religion or belief, race, age, or disability.
- 7.5 Members of staff must comply with relevant statutory provisions and other instructions that support the wellbeing and development of students, including where these require cooperation and collaboration with outside agencies. They must comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of achievement and attainment.
- 7.6 Members of staff must be prepared to undertake training and other professional development opportunities as appropriate within their normal contracted hours of work.
- 7.7 All schools within the Trust are non-smoking sites and therefore smoking is entirely prohibited. While at work, members of staff should never smoke

where students may see them. This includes the use of e-cigarettes (or other nicotine substitute products).

- 7.8 Where members of staff are provided with residential accommodation for the better performance of their duties, they must ensure that the accommodation is maintained in a clean and presentable condition and that the provisions of their licence with the Trust is observed, in accordance with the licence agreement.
- 7.9 In accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2010, residents are not permitted to allow boarders access to residential accommodation other than in exceptional circumstances. Where this does occur, a one-one situation should be avoided with boarders with another adult always present.
- 7.10 The college/school campus and resources are first and foremost for use as part of the educational and extra-curriculum provision of the institution. College/school campus and resources must not be used for other reasons without the express permission of the Headteacher.
- 7.11 Residential staff should only use college facilities with the express permission of the Headteacher and must follow all H&S and security rules and expectations.
- 7.12 To maintain physical and cyber security staff should not share door codes, passwords or salto cards with any unauthorised person or allow unauthorised persons access to any part of the college campus.
- 7.13 Volunteers and adults who are not employed by the Trust but live in Trust accommodation have no rights of discipline relating to students and should refer any concerns to the Headteacher.
- 7.14 Members of staff should be aware of the requirement to restrict social interaction with any students (including via social media) and ensure that any social contact with students outside of the Trust is conducted within professional boundaries and is open and transparent. This applies also to ex-students.

## **8. Alcohol and Drugs**

- 8.1 Staff who are on duty are not permitted to drink alcohol.
- 8.2 Employees must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours and must not support or influence others to use alcohol or drugs. Employees suspected of using or dealing drugs in the workplace will be reported to the police.

- 8.3 If an employee has an alcohol or drug dependency problem, the Trust will consider it as a treatable illness. Headteacher/line managers will provide assistance and support wherever possible. If an employee refuses help or drops out of a treatment programme, whilst this may not be automatic grounds for dismissal, it may affect the level of support we provide. Any behaviour or performance concerns after that will be subject to appropriate action.
- 8.4 Any use or possession of illegal drugs or substances or Novel Psychoactive Substances such as legal highs by staff is entirely prohibited on any school premises.

## 9. Conduct outside of work

- 9.1 The Trust recognises that employees lives and activities after working hours are a personal matter. However, where the actions of a staff member have brought the Trust name into disrepute or they have demonstrated improper behaviour causing the Trust to lose faith in the employees' integrity, it may be appropriate for the Trust to get involved.
- 9.2 Examples include:
- At office parties, drinks events and other work-related social occasions;
  - At third-party occasions where the employee has been invited in their capacity as an employee and representative of the Trust; or
  - At work-related conferences and training courses.
- 9.3 In these circumstances staff are still representing the Trust and must behave in a mature, appropriate, and responsible manner. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action taken against the employee.
- 9.4 Teachers should refer to the Teaching Professional Standards part 2 which outlines the expectation that teachers demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- 9.5 For further information, employers should refer to the Trust Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

## 10. Close Personal Relationships

- 10.1 Employees must inform their Line Manager, HR or Head of school where close personal relationship exists, which may create a conflict of interest.

- 10.2 For example, if they have a close personal relationship with an interview candidate or have Line Management responsibilities for a friend or someone, they have a close personal relationship with. For further information refer to the Trust Relationship Policy.

## 11. Information and Communication Technology

- 11.1 ICT facilities are provided for the better performance of the duties of members of staff. They may also be used for personal purposes (in line with the ICT staff code of conduct and schools/Colleges user agreement) provided that such use does not involve the Trust in any additional cost, compromise the integrity of the Trust systems, impede their efficient operation or interfere with the proper performance of duties of the member of staff.
- 11.2 Members of staff must observe professional propriety in using electronic means of communication, whether or not provided by the school. In particular, they must not use Trust hardware or networks to access pornographic or otherwise inappropriate material from the internet.
- 11.3 The Headteacher, Trust SLT, deputy CEO or CEO may authorise the monitoring of ICT facilities used by staff to detect misuse or malpractice.
- 11.4 The Trust reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review information and communication technology provided to staff without prior notification or authorisation from the individual employee. Usage of our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to telephone, e-mail, messaging, voicemail, CCTV, internet and social media postings and activities are monitored to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for the following purposes:
- To monitor whether the use of the e-mail system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this Code;
  - To assist in the investigation of alleged wrongful acts; and/or
  - To comply with any legal obligation

## 12. Social Media

- 12.1 Members of staff must not interact with students via social media. Members of staff must also not encourage or initiate social contact with pupils or students once the member of staff has ceased working at the Trust.
- 12.2 Staff are advised not to communicate on social media platforms with ex-students. Professional judgment should be exercised and all communications must be transparent and open to scrutiny. If in any doubt about whether it is

appropriate to make contact with an ex student, staff are advised to discuss this with the Head teacher, deputy CEO or CEO.

- 12.3 If a member of staff's use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, brings the Trust into disrepute or breaches the Dignity at Work policy then the Trust may take action under the Trust Disciplinary procedure.
- 12.4 The Trust may require members of staff to remove social media posts that are deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.
- 12.5 Members of staff are responsible for their words and actions in an online environment and therefore are advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they post on social media is something that they would want students, colleagues, their manager or people outside of the Trust to read.

### 13. Transporting Pupils

- 13.1 In certain situations (e.g. out of school activities), adults may agree to transport students. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated employee who will be responsible for planning and overseeing all transport arrangements and respond to any concerns that may arise. Wherever possible and practicable, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as escort.
- 13.2 It is inappropriate for a member of staff to offer a lift to a student unless this has been agreed with the Headteacher, and if this falls outside of normal working duties, has been agreed with parents/carers. There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and parents/carers.
- 13.3 Details of when business insurance is required can be found in the [SET Driving for Work Policy May 2024 .pdf](#).

### 14. Financial Probity

- 14.1 Members of staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including the use of Trust property and finance.

- 14.2 Members of staff must not hold monies belonging to the Trust, students or parents in their own bank accounts at any time or for any reason.
- 14.3 Members of staff must not use the Trust resources for their own benefit nor derive personal pecuniary benefit, unless they have received prior agreement from the Trust deputy CEO or CEO.
- 14.4 Members of staff making decisions concerning the procurement of goods or services must declare any conflict of interest that may arise.
- 14.5 Where staff are donated gifts which either singularly or cumulatively over a 12-month period, have a monetary value exceeding £25 these should be included on the register of gifts received and declared.
- 14.6 Please note that staff should not accept cash or cash denominated gifts.
- 14.7 For further information refer to the SET Finance Procedure Document.

## 15. Confidentiality

- 15.1 Members of staff shall maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to both students and staff sensitive matters.
- 15.2 Members of staff must not act in a way that is likely to bring the Trust into disrepute. Members of staff are reminded that they have a duty of confidentiality to the Trust as their employer and they must therefore not divulge information concerning the Trust or any student to any third party, except in relation to their professional duties.

## 16. Conviction of a Criminal Offence

- 16.1 A member of staff or a resident who is convicted of a criminal offence or has accepted a caution in respect of an offence must report this to the Headteacher, deputy CEO or CEO. The Trust deputy CEO or CEO will decide whether the severity and nature of the offence is such as to compromise the role of the member of staff, in which case an investigation may be carried out in line with the disciplinary policy.

## 17. Whistleblowing

- 17.1 A member of staff who believes that criminal activity or wrongdoing of any other serious kind is taking place within the Trust must report the matter to their line manager, Headteacher, deputy CEO, CEO or external agency. In doing so, they are protected from recrimination by the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

## 18. Teachers' Standards and Other Professional Bodies

- 18.1 The conduct of teachers is regulated by the "Teachers Standards" document published by the Department of Education, which has been incorporated into the Trust Performance Management Policy.
- 18.2 Some members of support staff will also be subject to codes of conduct relating to their membership of professional bodies, which they are expected to comply with.

## 19. Declaration

- 19.1 Code of conduct declaration:

I have read and understood the Trusts' Code of Conduct Policy and agree to work to the expected standards. Regardless of my background and circumstances, I agree to treat all colleagues and visitors with respect and dignity while carrying out the duties and responsibilities of my role.

Print Name	
Signature	
Date	