Telford & Wrekin Council

Schools HR Advisory Service

Model Policy Document

Employee Code of Conduct

Introduced	July 2015
Reviewed	September 2026
Consulted recognised Trade Unions on review	Formal TU consultation not required as updates reflect statutory guidance, legislation and procedures only
Adopted by: St Matthew's CE (Aided) Primary School and Nursery Centre	

1. Introduction

This document outlines the school's expectation in relation to employee conduct and outlines the school's responsibility to the employee. This document mainly refers to conduct expected in the workplace, including online, but may also cover conduct when representing the school e.g. whilst at training, attending work related functions or activities on social media that may affect the reputation of the school.

It should also be used in conjunction with other relevant policies and standards such as professional standards, Staff handbook, Child protection and Safeguarding policies, Low-level Concerns policy, Online Safety policy, Behaviour policy, and the contract of employment/written statement of particulars.

Given the nature of this establishment, this document should also be a guide to assist in ensuring children's and employees safety. It therefore explains the responsibilities the school has toward employees and children/pupils on a whole school basis

This code should be reviewed regularly by Governors and reissued to staff after the review.

2. Duty of Care

This School has a duty of care to the pupils/children within it and also to all employees.

This duty should be at the heart of all employee and employer practice.

Pupils/children – employees within this School have a duty to keep pupils/children safe, promote their welfare, protect them from harm, and have a child centred approach to safeguarding, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Given the position of trust this places employees in, employees are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils/children's safety and wellbeing. **Please refer to the Child Protection & Safeguarding in Policy that this school have adopted.**

Employers – employers should provide a safe working environment and appropriate guidance regarding safer working practices. They should also ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. Employees will be informed of all relevant policies as part of their induction. Where a new or revised policy is adopted, the school will ensure each employee has access to it.

In addition, each employee has a personal duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

Employees should:

- Understand the responsibilities of their role and the sanctions should these not be followed
- Act and be seen to act in the pupil's/child's best interest
- Act in a way to protect the school's reputation
- Avoid conduct which could lead to question over motivation and intentions
- Act in line with School policy and procedure
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Speak up promptly about any concerns they have or anything they have witnessed that could give rise to concern

- Have due regard that safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is paramount and everyone's business
- All school staff should make the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (if this is the headteacher) aware of any relationships and associations both within and outside of the workplace (including online) that may have implications for the safeguarding of children in school.
- Note that unjustifiable delay in reporting concerns is not acceptable.

Employers should:

- Clarify what is expected about an employee at work and where relevant, outside of work
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- Support for your rights and recognise diversity
- Foster a culture of openness and support
- Ensure that appropriate policies are adopted, implemented, monitored and reviewed e.g. employee policies, safeguarding, child protection, code of conduct
- Ensure that employees have access to and understand guidance, related policies and systems that are in place
- Ensure that employees are not placed in a vulnerable position
- Ensure that those who provide services or activities are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Treat employees reasonably and fairly

3. Complaints

Should an employee have a concern with the way in which they are being treated by their employer, the Grievance process should be followed. Advice should be sought by the employee from their relevant trade union.

Should an employee have a complaint relating to the school then they should use the relevant policy e.g. Whistleblowing Procedures, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or any other procedure that the school has identified and adopted.

Should the employer have concerns regarding employee conduct, the employer should always try to resolve the matter at the lowest possible level i.e. through discussion with the employee. For more serious matters, the school may need to refer to the relevant employment policy e.g. discipline.

4. Employee Code of Conduct

This code covers a number of situations but does not cover all eventualities. Where it is necessary to refer to a specific School policy, this will be noted.

Furthermore, the document produced by the Safer Recruitment Consortium - Guidance on Safer Working Practice is universally regarded as a best practice guide to work alongside local policies.)

4.1 Dress and Appearance

All employees should dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role, individuals they work with and work they undertake, including online and virtual teaching.

Clothing and appearance should not:

- cause embarrassment or give rise to any misunderstanding
- be likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- be considered to be discriminatory or culturally sensitive
- be political or represent contentious slogans

Further information can be found in the Schools Staff Handbook.

4.2 Behaviour

All employees have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in both the school and their own ability to provide an outstanding level of education and care whilst safeguarding the welfare and best interest of the pupils/children they are responsible for.

Equally, all employees should be able to carry out their duties in an environment where all individuals treat each other fairly and with respect and dignity. Acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated.

Employees should foster an approach which is aligned to the ethos of the school and understand the school's behaviour policy. Therefore, employees can expect to be treated reasonably and fairly.

It is not acceptable to behave in a manner which could question an employee's suitability to work with pupils/children or encourage others to make unprofessional comments or comments which could cause offense.

This level of behaviour is to be expected at all times when representing the school which includes attending such events as training and work-related social functions.

With the rise of social media, it is not acceptable for employees to behave in such a way that would not uphold public confidence within the school. **Please refer to the school's child protection & safeguarding in schools' policies.**

4.3 Confidentiality

Employees can expect to have their personal information secured confidentially. Personal matters should also be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Employees within the School may have access to private or sensitive information about the pupils/children within the school. These details must be kept confidential and only shared when it is in the child's best interest to do so.

The Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. Personal information is information about a living individual, who can be identified from the information.

This School is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and handles all personal information in a manner that complies with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. It is the **personal responsibility** of all employees (temporary or permanent), Governors, contractors, agents and anyone else processing information on our behalf to comply with this policy.

Storage of any such information should be in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

Any deliberate breach of this policy could amount to a criminal offence under one or more pieces of legislation, for example the Computer Misuse Act 1990 the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. All breaches will be investigated, and appropriate action taken.

Employees should report concerns to a senior member of the school / data protection officer (DPO) / information governance officer (IGO).

Employees should be aware of the requirement for the DPO / IGO to report breaches of data protection legislation to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

4.4 Gifts

Employees should not receive or accept gifts, loan, fees, hospitality or other reward ***which influences the way*** in which duties are carried out.

For transparency if an employee is ***given low level "thank you" gifts from parents or children e.g. homemade gifts, flowers, chocolates, biscuits etc.*** then they should let the school know. In all cases a professional judgement should be made around what is acceptable, proportionate and appropriate. If in doubt the employee should seek guidance from the Head teacher at the school.

Employees have a responsibility to report any such reward or suspicions of any such awards to the **appropriate person within the school.**

4.5 Use of Internet and Social Media

The use of the Internet and social media in the workplace can be very useful but also can be open to misuse. Employees must take every step to protect themselves when using such 'media' and **must refer to the school's acceptable use of technology and use of Social Media policy.**

Employees must also be careful when using social media personally to ensure that no activity conflicts with expected standards of behaviour for adults working with children or may reflect negatively on the school's reputation. Should such information be brought to the school's attention, the disciplinary process may be followed.

4.5 Use of technology

Staff must adhere to the school's acceptable use of technology policy alongside the following:

Staff are not permitted to use personal technology devices while working directly with pupils and/or during their hours of work. These should only be used away from areas children access.

Where professional technology devices are provided to staff for the purpose of their role and responsibilities, these are permitted for use in line with the school's acceptable use of technology policy.

Staff have a responsibility to model safe practice and use of technology devices at all times.

Staff engaging in online learning should display the same standards of dress and conduct that they would in the real world; they should also role model this to pupils and parents.

4.6 Raising Concerns – Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff should be committed to working in a culture where the values of the school and effective safeguarding are upheld, this includes openness, trust and honestly. All staff are responsible for implementing and reinforcing these values.

All schools have a standalone child protection and safeguarding policy with appropriate appendices and related safeguarding procedures. For avoidance of doubt ***all school staff*** need to be aware and implement the schools safeguarding and associated policies.

It is important to note that these policies supplement and work within the overarching Telford & Wrekin Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures, for avoidance of doubt, these can be viewed at Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership website. These policies are pivotal to all areas safeguarding and any actions that may be considered, taken and expected of those that work and interact with children.

Staff must adhere to the requirements set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. For staff working within early years foundation stage the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2026 should also be followed.

Staff are expected to adhere to the highest standards of conduct to maintain the safety and welfare of children, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Staff are expected to model and uphold fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff should ensure that personal political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, staff must take reasonably practicable steps to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

Staff are expected to implement School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy understanding how to identify safeguarding and welfare concerns and to record and report these in line with their school policy. All concerns for a child's safety or welfare should be responded to and reported as set out in the schools Child Protection & Safeguarding policy. Failure to take appropriate action and any inappropriate delays in responding and reporting concerns for a child's welfare beyond what is reasonably practicable is a breach of this code of conduct.

If anyone working in the school community identifies a concern about a breach of this code of conduct, they must 'speak up'. All those working in the school community must follow the school Whistleblowing Policy.

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable our school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; and minimise the risk of abuse. A culture of vigilance will help to ensure that adults working in or

on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

All staff should report concerns that are of a 'low-level'. This can be a concern of any kind; this can include a member of the school community acting in a way that:

- does not meet the allegations thresholds or of a level to refer to the LADO
- that does not uphold the school code of conduct, including out of work.

All 'low-level' concerns must be reported to the Headteacher or to the chair of governance or proprietor if concerns relate to the conduct of the headteacher. They may choose to delegate the investigation of 'low-level' concerns to other members of the senior leadership team. Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.

The school has a full policy on managing low level concerns and allegations against staff which can be found in the 'Procedures for managing low-level concerns or allegations against staff (including supply staff, contractors and volunteers)' policy.

Staff should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, including child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example, dismissing sexual harassment can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

4.7 Conflicts of Interest

Employees must be mindful to avoid personal circumstances which could lead to conflict of interest and should discuss/report any potential conflicts of interest with the Head teacher as soon as possible.

4.8 Health & Safety

The school will endeavour to abide by Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of employees at work.

Employees are expected to follow appropriate Health and Safety guidance to keep themselves and others safe at work.

Employees have a duty to identify and manage hazards and take steps to reduce potential levels of risk.

Employees also have their own duty of care to take care of themselves, and anyone else affected by their actions or failings.