

Telford & Wrekin Council

Additional Employee Code of Conduct for those working in Schools

Introduced: September 2019

1 Introduction

This document outlines the Council's expectation in relation to employee conduct for those working within schools. This document mainly refers to conduct expected in the work place 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, child protection and safeguarding policies, behaviour policy, and the contract of employment/written statement of particulars.

2. Duty of Care

This School has a duty of care to the pupils/children within it as do all of those who are employed to work at the school – including those employed by the Council.

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

Pupils/children – employees within the School have a duty to keep pupils/children safe and protect them from harm as outlined in “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2019. Given the position of trust this places employees in, employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure pupils/children’s safety and well being. **Please refer to the Child Protection & Safeguarding in Schools Policies that this school have adopted.**

Employees – 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 Schools reputation
- Avoid conduct which could lead to question over motivation and intentions
- Act in line with Council/School policy and procedure
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Speak up promptly about any concerns they have
- Have due regard that safeguarding children and their welfare is paramount and everyone’s business
- All those working in schools should make their line manager 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 Council as 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 Council as 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 Council 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 for safer working practice those for those working with children and young people in educational settings” 2019** is universally regarded as a best practice guide to work alongside local policies.

4.1 Dress and Appearance

All those working in schools should dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role, individuals they work with and work they undertake.

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

4.2 Behaviour

All those working at the school have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in both the School, the Council and their own ability to provide an outstanding level of service whilst safeguarding the welfare and best interest of the pupils/children.

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.

Those staff working in schools should foster an approach which is aligned to the ethos of the School.

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 Council/ 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 Council/school. **Please refer to the schools child protection & safeguarding in schools policies.**

4.3 Confidentiality

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

Those staff working in schools 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 (DPA 2018) establishes a framework of rights and duties which makes personal information safe. 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 DPA 2018. 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.

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 and the DPA 2018. All breaches will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Those staff working in schools should report concerns to a senior member of the School.

4.4 Gifts

Those staff working in schools 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 their line manager.

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 work place 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 Social Media policy that is contained within the School Child protection & Safeguarding in School Policies.**

Employees must also be careful when using social media personally to ensure that no activity relates negatively on the Councils/Schools reputation. Should such information be brought to the Council/Schools attention, the disciplinary process may be followed.

4.6 Raising Concerns – Safeguarding

All schools have a standalone Child Protection and Safeguarding in Schools Policies with appropriate appendices. For avoidance of doubt **all those staff working in schools** need to be aware and implement the principles of its content.

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 www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk. 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.

It also acknowledged that “Working Together” 2018 and “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2019 Parts 1-5 are viewed on the same principle.

Those staff working in schools are expected to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education as part of their induction.

On a general level the highest standards of safeguarding conduct are expected from the whole school community. It is important to note that in particular well known and peripheral areas of safeguarding concern should be paramount to a child’s welfare namely;

- Four Defined Categories of Abuse - Sexual, Emotional, Physical and Neglect as defined in “Working Together” 2018
- Extremism & Radicalisation (Statutory - “Prevent duty guidance” March 2015)

Furthermore staff working in schools are expected to encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff working in schools should ensure

that partisan political views are not promoted in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

Further areas (amongst others) for all staff to note are;

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - Multi Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government 2014 – There is a specific legal duty on teacher, who, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.
- Children That Have Gone Missing (T&W Missing Children Process 2016)
- Forced Marriage - “Handing Cases of Forced Marriage” Multi Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government June 2009
- Children Missing From Education - Whether Authorised or Not
- Poor/Irregular Attendance (Protocol for Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Not Receiving Education)
- Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE) -T&W Pathway Process
- Domestic Violence and Serious Harm
- Drug and substance misuse
- Suicide Intervention
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
- Fabricated and induced illness
- Youth violence, gang activity and county lines

School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies will take account of all these issues and other areas and therefore staff conduct in addressing any safeguarding concerns is paramount and doing nothing is not an option.

4.7 Conflicts of Interest

Those staff working in schools must be mindful to avoid personal circumstances which could lead to conflict of interest and should discuss/report any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager 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.

Those staff working at the school are expected to follow appropriate Health and Safety guidance to keep themselves and others safe at work. Employees also have their own duty of care to take care of themselves and anyone else affected by their actions or failings.