

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL
LOUDWATER COMBINED SCHOOL
CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR SCHOOL STAFF

October 2023

Introduction

Loudwater School aims to ensure the highest standards of conduct and will assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability.

This Code of Conduct draws together existing School policies and procedures and must be read in conjunction with our school Child Protection Policy and Low-level Concerns Policy as well as the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2022)

Scope

This guidance applies to:

- Teachers
- Employees in Schools employed under the terms of Bucks Pay Employment Conditions.
- All temporary, casual and agency workers including supply teachers.

Teachers are also expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with both the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers and, where applicable, this guidance. Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

Underpinning principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount and the responsibility of all staff members
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way including self-reporting if their conduct or behaviour falls short of these guiding principles. (See the Low-level Concerns Policy for more information).
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Head teacher if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- 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 Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- Staff and the Head teacher should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- Staff should be aware of and understand Loudwater School's Child Protection Policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, Use of mobile devices policy and the Whistleblowing procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers, Head teachers and employees have a responsibility under this Code of Conduct. Teachers and Head teachers will:

- Apply the policies and procedures detailed in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within Loudwater School.
- Ensure all new employees are made aware of this Code of Conduct on commencing employment at the School.
- Deal promptly, thoroughly and fairly with any matter arising from a breach of this guidance.

Employees will:

- Act in accordance with the Principles set out in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the Loudwater School.
- Never use their position for personal gain.
- Through procedures outlined in our School's policies, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or breach of this guidance.
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard such that confidence in their integrity is sustained.

Employees in roles that have their own professional code of conduct must appropriately apply the standards of their profession in line with this guidance.

In relation to employees at Loudwater School the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body.

Principles

This Code of Conduct is founded on the following principles:

- To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees of the Governing Body.
- To support the Governing Body's visions and values, policies and procedures.
- To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees, Teachers and Head teacher.
- To ensure all employees, Teachers and the Head teacher treat colleagues and those they interact with during their work with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this guidance on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, caste, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, other grounds protected by law (e.g. part-time worker status, trade union membership or HIV positive status).

Safeguarding

The Governing Body has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident and safe to do so.

All employees who encounter children, young people and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

It is essential that all employees are aware of and refer to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings. (See Appendix 1)

Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

Employees may, during their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of Data Protection legislation. The

Governing Body requires that the confidentiality of this information be respected. (See the Toolkit for further information).

Employees must not use information obtained during their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary. Any meeting recorded without the consent of all those present (covert recordings) will be treated as a conduct matter. If employees have any misgivings about either the process or those leading it, they should tell us openly so that we can address concerns.

Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of the School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate use of social networking websites such as Facebook.

Commercial Practices including Gifts and Hospitality

The principal aim of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Practices is to ensure that the School's business is conducted in accordance with the very highest standards.

Employees should never use their position for personal gain and should seek to uphold and enhance the reputation of the School by:

- maintaining a high standard of integrity in all professional relationships;
- fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
- complying both with the letter and the spirit of:
 - i. the law;
 - ii the Governing Body Standing Orders;
 - iii any additional guidance supplied by the Governing Body;
 - iv the Conditions of Service of Employees of the Governing Body.
- rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.

The guidelines in Appendix 2 of this document express the obligations of employees which exist in legislation or are expressed or implied conditions of appointment.

Prevention of Fraud & Corruption

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services and management of its resources and assets. All employees are always expected to act with integrity and to comply with legal requirements, rules, procedures and good practice.

Further guidance can be obtained in the School's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

Raising Concerns in the Workplace – Grievances and Whistleblowing

The Governing Body believes that an employee should report any significant concern they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the School without fear of victimisation.

In the first instance, employee concerns should be raised via the Schools internal complaints procedure. (See Toolkit for further information).

Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, employees can report unresolved issues under the School's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. If an employee has a concern regarding their own employment they should raise this under the School's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

Dignity and Equality at Work

The Governing Body wishes to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. The Governing Body is committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.

All employees are expected to adopt the School's vision of equality of opportunity. The School's Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to.

Close Personal Relationships at Work

The Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on School services.

The Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school), whom they meet because of their employment. Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.

Further guidance can be found in the Close Personal Relationships at Work documentation in Appendix 3.

New Appointments

Employees involved in appointing new staff must ensure that appointments are made based on merit alone. There is a strong risk of illegality if an employee makes an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the applicant to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in appointments where they are related to an applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them or have knowledge of them in another context e.g. business associates.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.

All applicants will be asked to declare any relationship to the Chair of Governors or the Service Director Education. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.

For further guidance, Head teachers should refer to the document titled Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Employees in Schools. This is available on Schoolsweb.

Work for Other Organisations

Applicants for employment with the Governing Body will be asked to disclose to the Head teacher or Chair of Governors, any employment or work in any capacity they may have with other organisations. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.

All employees must notify their Head teacher or Chair of Governors if they are undertaking work for another organisation. This includes work in any capacity e.g. contract of employment, consultancy or contract for services.

Employees should refer to the Government Working Time Regulations that came into effect in 1998, when considering additional appointments or employment. (See Toolkit for further guidance). For a period of 6 months after the termination of employment, former Buckinghamshire Council employees shall not solicit custom, directly or indirectly, from any customer/client of

Buckinghamshire Council with whom they have had contact, and to whom they have provided services, during the 12 months prior to the termination of your employment.

For the purposes of this clause, such a customer/client is defined as any individual(s), group, or organisation with which you have had contact or correspondence during your employment with Buckinghamshire Council.

Communication, Computer Usage and the Internet

Use of the School's equipment, systems and network is provided as part of an individual's work role. Employees should be familiar with the relevant School policies surrounding computer usage, internet access and electronic communications.

Misuse of the equipment, systems and network may be grounds for disciplinary action under the School's Conduct & Discipline Policy & Procedure, which, if found to constitute gross misconduct, could render an individual liable to dismissal.

Use of technology to contact students can suggest an informality which is inappropriate and must be avoided. Great care should be exercised over the use of communications technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites and blogs unless contact via these routes is required and for which permission has been given by a senior manager e.g. field trips and expeditions. (See Toolkit for further guidance).

Social Media Use

Social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video-and image-sharing websites such as YouTube.

Employees must follow the School's policy on the use of social media which is available as part of the School's Computing and Online Safety Policies.

Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

Loudwater School is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive working environment and to minimising problems arising from the misuse of drugs and alcohol at work.

Those representing the School are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol. They must avoid the use of illegal substances or any substance which may affect their work or which might place them at risk of accidents, loss of efficiency or effectiveness. Anyone working on behalf of the School must not possess, consume, sell or give away illegal drugs especially whilst on duty or undertaking work on behalf of the School.

Inappropriate behaviour because of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline, Capability.

Breach of the Code of Conduct

Failure to comply with this guidance and associated School policies may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.

Reviewed October 2023

APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE FOR SAFER WORKING PRACTICE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

<https://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/d71d6fd8-b99e-4327-b8fd-1ac968b768a4~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

This document can also be found in the School Policies/Safeguarding information section of the school intranet.

APPENDIX 2: CODE OF CONDUCT IN COMMERCIAL PRACTICES

This document can be found in the School Policies/Safeguarding information/Code of Conduct section of the school intranet.

APPENDIX 3: CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

This document can be found in the School Policies/Safeguarding information/Code of Conduct section of the school intranet.

CODE OF CONDUCT TOOLKIT

This document can be found in the School Policies/Safeguarding information/Code of Conduct section of the school intranet.