



**SPECIALIST LEARNING TRUST**

**STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

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## **Statement of intent**

Glebe expects all of its students to receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

Employees at the school should understand that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, students, parents/carers and other stakeholders, sets an example.

Glebe recognises that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This document forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are:

- Employed by the school, including the headteacher.
- Employed by the Specialist Learning Trust

Agency staff, instructors and volunteers working at Glebe School are expected to have regard to the Staff Code of Conduct (see also section 3 Safeguarding Pupils).

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
- School catering staff who are employed by an external organisation
- Contract cleaners who are employed by an external organisation
- Employees of other external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended)

1.2 This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020 (KCSIE)
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018

## **2. Related school policies**

2.1 This Staff Code of Conduct has due regard to the following school policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Staff Leave of Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement

## **3. Safeguarding pupils**

3.1 In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance, all staff members and anyone working in school, including supply teachers and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard students and protect their welfare.

3.2 The school has a duty to follow the procedures set out in KCSIE where it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including supply teachers and volunteers 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;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

If an allegation is found to be substantiated, this may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

- 3.3 KCSIE states that in some circumstances schools and colleges will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, where its disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency or business (referred to in this section as 'the agency'). Whilst the school is not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances will the school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. The school will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst we carry out our investigation.
- 3.4 All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which students feel safe, secure and respected.
- 3.5 In order to effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions. To do this employees must have fully read and understood our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and must follow this at all times.
- 3.6 In accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, and will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures.
- 3.7 Any staff member that has concerns about a staff member's actions or intent that may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm will report this immediately to the headteacher, in line with the Whistleblowing Policy, so appropriate action can be taken.

#### **4. Duty of care**

- 4.1 Staff must:
- Understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
  - Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests;
  - Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions.

#### **5. Appearance and dress**

- 5.1 The school expects that staff members will:
- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work, or representing the school.
  - Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role.
  - Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times.

- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents/carers, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- Cover up tattoos/ body art and piercings that the school deem offensive and insensitive to others.
- Cover any tattoos or body art whilst in school; small earrings are acceptable, but all other body piercings must be removed.
- We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times.
- Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable, they will be informed.

## **6. Attendance**

6.1 The school expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible.
- Contact the headteacher if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Read the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy and follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

## **7. Professional behaviour and conduct**

7.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our school:

- Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents/carers, and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.
- Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff members will inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- Teachers must know, understand and adhere to all of the national teachers' standards to ensure that pupils receive the highest level of quality teaching. All teachers must:
  - Set high expectations, which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils;
  - Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils;
  - Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge;
  - Plan and teach well-structured lessons;

- Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils;
- Make accurate and productive use of assessment;
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment;
- Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.

## **8. Conduct outside of work**

- 8.1 'Keeping children safe in education' states that schools have a responsibility to deal with allegations that staff have behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children. This includes conduct both at school and also outside of the work place. If an allegation is found to be substantiated, this may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- 8.2 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- 8.2 Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.
- 8.3 Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. This is explored further in section 18 E-safety.
- 8.4 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.
- 8.5 Employees must ensure that they:
- Uphold the law at work
  - Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in themselves or Glebe School, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
    - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims);
    - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents;
    - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults;
    - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust;
  - Write and tell the headteacher immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the School (this includes outside of their working hours). The headteacher and/or trustees will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the school or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

## **9. Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

- 9.1 Staff will not smoke on the school premises.
- 9.2 Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.
- 9.3 The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- 9.4 If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

## **10. Health and safety**

- 10.1 Staff members will:
  - Be familiar with and adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
  - Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
  - Comply with hygiene requirements.
  - Comply with accident reporting requirements.
  - Inform the headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

## **11. Declaration of interests**

- 11.1 Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school.
- 11.2 For the purpose of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.
- 11.3 The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including:
  - Payments for services.
  - Equity interests.
  - Intellectual property rights.
  - Hospitality or gifts.
- 11.4 Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school.



- 11.5 Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage, including but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career, or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.
- 11.6 Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:
- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality.
  - Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship.
  - Where a member of staff has, or develops, a close personal relationship with a colleague.
- 11.7 Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.
- 11.8 Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.
- 11.9 Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.
- 11.10 All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the headteacher for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

## **12. Relationships with pupils**

- 12.1 The school expects that staff will:
- Treat students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
  - Have regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
  - Show tolerance of, and respect for, the rights of others.
  - Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
  - Ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
  - Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary (see also section 15 Professional Boundaries).
  - Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
  - Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
  - Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils; this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.

- Only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms; personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.

### **13. Physical contact with pupils**

- 13.1 The school understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.
- 13.2 When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 13.3 Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.
- 13.4 Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account.
- 13.5 Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent, and will always be prepared to explain their actions.
- 13.6 Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.
- 13.7 Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils.
- 13.8 Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.
- 13.9 Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher and appropriate procedures will be followed.
- 13.10 Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible; if a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so. Furthermore, staff participation in games with pupils should be controlled, non-competitive and mainly restricted to demonstration wherever possible.
- 13.11 If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 13.12 Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes; such instances will always be in accordance with the school's Use of Reasonable Force Policy.

#### **14. Showering and changing**

- 14.1 Students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing before/after PE; however a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.
- 14.2 The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 14.3 Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy.
- 14.4 Staff will never change or shower in the same area as pupils.

#### **15. Professional boundaries and relationships**

- 15.1 Employees in our trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals. It is a specific offence<sup>1</sup> for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) 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 consensual.
- 15.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.
- 15.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.
- 15.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.
- 15.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 15.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the trust we expect that they identify this to the headteacher and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Where an employee has managerial authority over another employee with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the school reserves the right to transfer one or both employees to another role in the school following appropriate consultation with both employees in order to seek agreement to the transfer.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003

## **16. Transporting pupils**

- 16.1 When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate license, and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.
- 16.2 Staff will gain consent from the school leadership team and parents/carers before transporting pupils, and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.
- 16.3 Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

## **17. Financial inducements**

- 17.1 Staff members will:
  - Familiarise themselves and comply with the school's financial regulations.
  - Declare to the board of trustees, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
    - Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
    - Gifts offered by parents/carers or pupils to school staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts.
    - Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
    - Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business, which shall be at the school's expense.
  - Not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned.
  - Declare any gift that cannot be returned to the board of trustees, who will decide how it will be used.
  - Only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the board of trustees.

## **18. E-safety**

- 18.1 Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the school's E-safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement at all times.
- 18.2 Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 18.3 Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites; this includes contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.
- 18.4 The school understands that some staff members are also parents/carers of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to make contact with other parents/carers. When

doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

- 18.5 Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence; this includes written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

## **19. Premises, equipment and communication**

- 19.1 School equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the headteacher.
- 19.2 Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.
- 19.3 Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something he/she proposes to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the headteacher.
- 19.4 The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.
- 19.5 Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the systems manager, only with the permission of the board of trustees.
- 19.6 Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the headteacher or systems manager. Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 19.7 School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment, or if requested to do so by the headteacher.

## **20. Photography and videos**

- 20.1 Photographs and videos will only be taken using school equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited, in accordance with the school's Photography at School Events Policy.
- 20.2 Consent will be obtained from parents/carers and pupils in the event of any images or videos of pupils which the school wishes to use, e.g. to publish on the website.
- 20.3 The wishes of the pupil will also be taken into account when taking images or videos, ensuring that those who do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed are respected.

- 20.4 The headteacher will always be notified of the proposed use of the imagery or video and the equipment, and ensure that the use of such is included in lesson plans where this is necessary.
- 20.5 All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny, and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.
- 20.6 Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, in order to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

## **21. Data protection and confidentiality**

- 21.1 Staff members are required, under the Data Protection Act 2018, to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a secure manner.
- 21.2 Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the LA to other parties.
- 21.3 The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information which would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.
- 21.4 Staff have a responsibility to ensure that electronic and paper data and information is kept secure at all times. Confidential information and personal data should not:
- be left unattended if being taken between home and work or between work places;
  - be taken to entertainment or public places, such as cafés, restaurants, pubs and cinemas;
  - be discussed where there is a possibility of being overheard.

Loss and misuse of information and data is a serious offence and may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

- 21.5 Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them; such requests will be made to the headteacher in writing, in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

## **22. Probity of records**

- 22.1 The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

## **23. Contacts**

- 23.1 Staff members shall not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

**24. Monitoring and review**

- 24.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years by the headteacher and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 24.2 All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.