

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Purpose and principles

The code of conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of employees within the Trust with the intention of encouraging employees to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The school requires that all employees have read and comply with the code of conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the school leader.

This document forms part of your contract of employment. Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary policy, a copy of which can be found in the employee handbook, staff room and Manual of Personnel Practice. This document is available to all employees as well as being provided on induction to all new employees.

The code of conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Scope

The code of conduct applies to:

- All employees, including teaching and support staff;
- volunteers, including governors;
- casual workers;
- temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training;
- apprentices.

References to 'employees' throughout the code of conduct refer to all of the above groups.

3. Professional standards at work

Employees are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The school expects employees to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times.

Employees must have regard for the ethos and values of the school as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Employees must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the school are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways employees should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the school.

Employees should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or substances, including prescribed medication that may affect their ability to carry out their work duties.

Any copyright created by an employee during their employment with the school becomes the property of the school.

4. Safeguarding

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that employees play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Employees are responsible for knowing and fulfilling their individual safeguarding responsibilities. This includes:

- Providing a safe environment in which children can learn;
- being aware of the signs of abuse and neglect;
- identifying children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm;
- taking appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All employees must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – often referred to as the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO).

In this school the DSL/CPLO(s) is/are: Mrs Laura Bennett – DSL (Head Teacher), Mrs Sally Wall – Deputy DSL (Deputy Head Teacher), Miss Olivia Prince – Safeguarding Lead (Pupil Engagement and Welfare Officer)

5. Appropriate relationships

Pupils

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Employees should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Employees should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Employees should think carefully about their conduct to avoid misinterpretation.

Employees must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. However, it is unrealistic to suggest employees will not need to touch pupils at any time. For example, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent should provide. Employees should not feel inhibited from providing this.

Employees should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint. In all cases employees should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy.

Employees, who have to administer first-aid to a pupil, should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no employee should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

Any physical contact which could be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Following any incident where an employee feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the DSL.

Any sexual behaviour by an employee with or towards a pupil, child or young person whether inside or outside of work is unacceptable. Employees are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over 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. The Keeping Children Safe in Education document defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

Parents

Employees are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Employees should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

6. Use of IT including social media

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of IT policy copy is available from the School Office.

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. Employees must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Employees must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. Employees must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

Please refer to the school's acceptable use of IT policy for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones, which can be found on the School Website.

7. Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Employees must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2008. Equally employees should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from the Trust Data Protection Officer (Gemma Carr, Deputy CEO, business).

All employees should complete the GDPR online training course available on the intranet ([Link to GDPR training](#)). The trust data protection policy, freedom of information policy and privacy notices can be found on the [trust website](http://www.hamwic.org) (www.hamwic.org).

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

The Deputy CEO, business has the right to access emails and documents of employees in the event of a subject access request.

8. Dress and appearance

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, employees should ensure that they dress appropriately, decently and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors.

Employees should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc.

The school recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other employees, pupils and the school.

Please refer to the school dress code for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable forms of dress which can be found on the School Website under Parents Information.

9. Equal opportunities

The governing body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of employees, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. It also recognises that all employees have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The school expects employees to uphold these principles.

10. Conduct outside work

Care must be taken by employees to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within school. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring the school into disrepute.

Employees must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of the Trust. Disclosure must be made to the Deputy CEO, business without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the Trust.

Where employees are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from the Head Teacher.

11. Declaration of interests

Employees should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the school's activities. This includes a relationship with a governor, another employee or a contractor who provides services to the school.

Employees may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be at a level which may contravene the [Working Time Regulations](#) or affect an individual's performance at work. Employees should ensure the school is aware of any such work. Any external work undertaken must not bring the school into disrepute or conflict with the school's interest.

Any employees involved in tendering processes should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. No employee should be involved in any appointment or decision relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for any individual who is a relative or with whom they are in a close personal relationship.

12. Whistleblowing

The [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the school will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Employees should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in the school. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for employees to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the trust's whistleblowing policy for further information [*state where it can be located in school*].

13. Health and safety

Employees must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe.

Please refer to the school's Health and Safety policy for further information copy available on the School Website.

14. Gifts and hospitality

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to employees, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Employees may accept small 'thank you' gifts of token value amounting to no more than £30. Token gifts provided to employees from parents need not be disclosed if the value of such gifts are under £10. The trust's gifts and hospitality policy should be referred to, if in any doubt.

It is not acceptable for employees to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school [*state where it can be located in school*].

Employees should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

15. Use of school resources and funds

The use of school resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All employees must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.

Associated documents/policies:

- **Acceptable use of IT policy**
- **Child protection policy**
- **Disciplinary policy**
- **Managing allegations against staff policy**
- **Whistleblowing policy**
- **Keeping children safe in education (latest guidance)**