



Prepared by:

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Signature:

Date:

03/10/2023

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30/10/2023

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Chair of Trustees

30/10/2023

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## 1. Aim, scope and principles

- 1.1. This policy has been written for Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust and is applicable to all of its employees. The terms 'staff' and 'trust staff' will be used to refer to all its employees, irrespective of whether they are school based or centrally employed. This term also relates to those working in the trust without wage – i.e. student teachers and volunteers.
- 1.2. This policy aims to set and maintain the standards that we expect all staff to follow and is underpinned by our mission, '**Achieving Excellence Together**' and the trust values, **Respect, Collaboration and Inspiration**. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all stakeholders feel safe, are happy and are treated with respect.
- 1.3. Many of the principles are linked to the Teacher Standards and the Nolan Principles. We expect that all staff act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and well-being of others and with an understanding that failing to follow the code of conduct could result in disciplinary action, in line with relevant policies.
- 1.4. The code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this policy, we expect that trust staff will make decisions and act in the best interests of the Trust and its stakeholders.
- 1.5. The code of conduct must be read, understood and applied in conjunction with other key policies such as Acceptable Use, Whistleblowing, Disciplinary Policy and KCSIE (most up to date version). Breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.
- 1.6. The trust recognises that the hours outside of employment are the personal concern of individual employees, however, it is pertinent for staff to be aware that they must not act so as to bring themselves, the Trust or the profession into disrepute.

## 2. General

- 2.1. All staff have a duty to:
  - Maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality
  - Maintain high standards of honesty and integrity
  - Treat all stakeholders with dignity and respect
  - Uphold and demonstrate fundamental British Values – Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect and Tolerance and Individual Liberty
  - Avoid expressing personal and/or political opinions in a way that may influence others or interfere with the fundamental nature of the MAT as a business or within the education sector – where possible, impartiality should be the presenting view
  - Act in a way that enables them to be role models for both pupils and wider stakeholders
  - Seek to know and understand the statutory frameworks within which they must act.

## 3. Safeguarding

- 3.1 All staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm. They must know and understand the procedures for safeguarding in schools, must read and understand KCSIE annually and have

an up-to-date awareness of the Prevent Duty. All staff **must** familiarise themselves with the procedures for raising and recording concerns, including those about adults working within or across the Trust. Safeguarding policies are available on each school website and paper copies can be obtained from school offices. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they do not behave or act in a way that constitutes meeting the threshold for harm and/or in a way that meets the criteria for low level concerns. Staff are responsible and are obliged for reporting any such behaviours that they witness or are aware of in others.

- 3.2 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold (applicable to anyone working (paid or otherwise) or volunteering for or within the trust):
- A person has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
  - A person has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - A person has behaved in a way towards children that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/children
  - A person has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour that takes place outside of their business role and/or work hours.
- 3.3 Any such allegations will be handled using the staff discipline procedures and will likely include the involvement of Wirral LA and the LADO as well as other agencies such as Merseyside Police.
- 3.4 Low level concerns are behaviours towards children by a member of staff (paid or otherwise and including volunteers) that do not meet the harm threshold but are inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct and the mission and values of the Trust. They may be as simple as causing a sense of unease but this does not mean that they are insignificant. Examples (not an exhaustive list) are:
- Being over-friendly with pupils
  - Having favourites
  - Minor breaches of school/trust policies
  - Engaging in 1:1 activities with children where they can't easily be seen
  - Humiliating pupils
- 3.5 Staff are responsible for reporting behaviours they witness in others and to self-report if they find themselves in a situation that could be interpreted as a cause for concern, including those at a low level. Staff are responsible for working together to create a culture of openness, transparency and trust.
- 3.6 All staff are responsible for creating and maintaining appropriate boundaries with pupils and parents and must act in a way that is fair and transparent. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they do not have contact with pupils, and where relevant, parents, outside of working hours and their professional practice. Personal contacts should not be exchanged with pupils – this includes social media profiles.
- 3.7 Where staff have an online presence, including that on social media platforms, staff must:
- Ensure that accounts are protected/private and not publicly available
  - Consider how to make their accounts less available – i.e. by not using full names
  - Refrain from contacting pupils or parents via social media

- Refrain from responding to or accepting requests from pupils/parents
- Be mindful of the content that they choose to post outside of their professional role – it must not bring themselves, the Trust or the profession into disrepute.

3.8 Acceptable use of technology, including personal devices:

- Staff must not access, view or share content/material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive.
- Staff must not use Trust technology for personal use.

3.9 The Trust reserves the right to monitor emails and internet use on the Trust IT system/network (all sites across the trust, including guest Wi-Fi)

#### **4. Confidentiality**

4.1. Staff must conform to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and relevant GDPR policies/procedures. Members of staff are often privy to confidential and sensitive information about the Trust, its schools, staff (paid or otherwise), pupils and parents. As such:

- Members of staff must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff or pupil to any unauthorised person, external organisation or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of the relevant Headteacher/CEO
- Members of staff must not use information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the school or for personal gain or benefit; nor should they impart this information to others who might use it in such a way
- Confidential information belonging to the school/MAT must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it
- Members of staff must not make or retain copies of sensitive information. All content created and received remains the property of the Trust.

4.2. The confidentiality aspect of this code of conduct does not impede or prevent safeguarding disclosures and reports being made.

#### **5. Other Employment**

5.1. Employees are not permitted to set up a business or accept employment with a business engaged in work which is in direct competition with the school/MAT

5.2. If employees do have another job, it must not conflict with the school's interest or bring the school into disrepute

5.3. If employees have another job with another organisation, they must not act as a messenger, go between or arbitrator between that organisation and the school/MAT. Formal channels of communication must be maintained

5.4. Employees' working commitments to another employer must not interfere with their work for the school; they must be able to work for the school at the contracted/arranged times

5.5. Any activity, paid or otherwise, involving pupils and parents, such as tutoring, must be declared and agreed with the Headteacher prior to engagement if this is outside of normal school operating hours

## **6. Dress Code**

6.1. The Trust expects its staff to dress in a professional, appropriate manner in clothing and footwear that is commensurate to their post and activities in which they participate. The trust expects that its staff will act as role models regarding being clean, neat and tidy. Professional judgement must be used but as a minimum, staff must not:

- Wear clothes that are overly revealing
- Wear clothes that display inappropriate, offensive or political slogans

6.2. Staff should also be mindful and considerate of the potential need to cover tattoos. Jewellery should be kept to a minimum to maintain health and safety standards and hair styles should not be extreme. The Trust promotes equality and diversity, and staff are encouraged to uphold preferences in relation to customs, culture, religion and tradition.

## **7. Financial inducement, gifts, hospitality, and sponsorship**

7.1. Employees must not seek or receive preferential rates by virtue of your dealings on behalf of the trust. Offers of hospitality, including visits to exhibitions, business meals, social functions, etc should only be accepted if there is a genuine need to represent the trust in an official capacity.

7.2. Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor or is sought to sponsor a school activity, the above rule applies. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

7.3. Staff may accept small tokens of appreciation. Any larger gifts (valued at £50 or more) must be declared and recorded in the school office.

## **8. Further Information**

8.1. This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert employees to some of the matters about which queries are received. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

8.2. If employees are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take in any situation, they must seek advice from relevant leaders such as Headteachers and the CEO/Deputy CEO.

**STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust and agree to abide by its contents.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_