Denefield School

Code of Conduct for School Staff

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL STAFF

1. Purpose

The conduct, behaviour, and practice of all school staff will have an influence on the development of children and young people. This code provides clear guidance on what is acceptable conduct and what is not for staff working at the school.

This model Code of Conduct does not cover every eventuality.

2. Applicability

This code applies to all staff working in the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring all staff in the school are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct. They provide support and encouragement to ensure staff maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, accountability and openness.

All staff are responsible for reading and adhering to the Code of Conduct and for reflecting on their own conduct and practice and ensuring they meet the standards required of them.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure. Serious breaches may result in dismissal from the school's employment.

Standards

The following standards apply to all school staff.

4. General Conduct

All staff are expected to apply the principles of public life (appendix 1) and to share the values of the school in their conduct at work, demonstrating honesty and integrity at all times. In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its staff is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents/carers, students, colleagues, trustees, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff. Any complaints about inappropriate conduct will be dealt with fairly and reasonably, using the agreed procedures.

All staff are expected to use their professional expertise and judgement to put the wellbeing, development, and progress of students first, within the context of their role.

All staff are expected to adhere to part two of the Teachers' Standards, which outline expectations for personal and professional conduct.

All individuals associated with the school have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. All staff are therefore expected to treat colleagues, students, parents/carers,

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trustees, school partners, other bodies or agencies or members of the community with dignity and respect.

Staff should not use their position within the school for any purpose other than school business.

The school has an agreed procedure for the management of staff discipline. All staff should make themselves aware of this procedure and the disciplinary rules which apply in the school.

All staff are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. Where an employee breaks the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or has a direct effect on work, the employee maybe be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

Staff are required to adhere to all health and safety policies and practices (see Working Safely – section 20).

The school operates a no smoking and no vaping policy and smoking or vaping is not allowed within the school or school grounds.

All staff must report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties. They must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Where staff are required to drive for work purposes, they have a responsibility for ensuring they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Where an employee is taking prescribed drugs, they should inform their line manager where this may affect behaviour and/or performance at work. This is especially important if the member of staff is required to operate machinery or drive a vehicle.

Staff should inform their line manager if they are suffering from a medical condition, or have personal circumstances, that may adversely affect performance at work.

5. Gifts and hospitality

Staff of the school may from time to time be offered gifts or hospitality, for example from students or parents/carers. The following advice should guide decisions on receipt of such gifts/hospitality:

- In receiving any gifts or donations on behalf of the school, consideration will at all times be given to the UK Bribery Act 2010. The Finance and Business Director (FBD) holds a gifts register where details of all individual gifts received by staff with a value of over £25, whether monetary or other, must be recorded.
- There will be no restriction on staff receiving low value gifts from students or suppliers, up to the value of £25. However, any items potentially over this value must be declared to the FBD to make sure they do not constitute an offence under the Act.

- All staff should refrain from accepting any form of hospitality from a potential supplier of goods or provider of services as this could be construed as bribery. However, provided prior approval is given, this may be considered acceptable. The FBD and Headteacher will be the final arbitrators on this.
- Personal gifts from employees to pupils are inappropriate and should not be made. Such gives could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Financial and personal interests

All staff must at all times be seen to be acting fairly and impartially and personal needs or interests, or those of family or friends, must not influence actions or decisions.

As an Academy, where an employee has a close friend, associate or relative who is providing goods or services to the school, of a kind that the employee deals with directly or monitors in the course of their work, this should be disclosed and the transaction is required to be such that the supplier does not make a profit and the supply is provided to the School at cost, which has to be demonstrated. Disclosures must be made in writing to the Headteacher, who will advise any other school staff who may need to know.

Off-duty hours are generally the personal concern of the employee, though staff must not engage in any outside activity that may conflict with the interests of the school or could damage the confidence of the community in the school or the role of the employee.

7. Other employment

Members of the school management team must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment (paid or unpaid) without the written consent of the Headteacher. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

The Headteacher must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment (paid or unpaid) without the written consent of the Chair of Trustees. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld and will be encouraged where this supports professional development. Any income from an additional appointment should benefit the school rather than the Headteacher.

Other staff may take up additional employment without consent providing the employment does not conflict with the interests of the school or in any way weaken the confidence of the community in the individual or school. Where an employee undertakes additional employment they must notify their line manager of the number of hours they is working per week, to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

Notwithstanding the paragraph above, it is considered a conflict of interest for any member of staff to provide paid tutoring to a student at the school.

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8. Confidentiality

Confidential information must be managed in line with GDPR and not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know. Paper-based and electronic information must be stored securely and confidentially with access limited to those who have a right to view it.

Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential or that, if it were made public, may lead to a breakdown in the trust and confidence the school is required to provide to the community. It may be necessary to discuss confidential information with colleagues. Where this is the case, the discussions must take place in private.

Staff must not disclose any information about the school/students to the press or other media unless expressly authorised to do so by the Headteacher.

Staff must not disclose information about the school or its students on social networking sites or such similar sites. Staff should consider the information that they include on these sites and how the information may impact on the school and its reputation. Inappropriate disclosure of information may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. See the school's Data Protection E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy

Staff must not put confidential or sensitive information on memory sticks which have not been encrypted to ensure confidential information cannot be accessed should the stick be lost or misplaced.

9. Communication, social media and photographs

Staff must not post material that damages the reputation of the school or raises concerns about their suitability to work with children and young people. Posting inappropriate content may lead to disciplinary action.

Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or strengthening a relationship. This includes all social networking and messaging platforms, such as (but not limited to) X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, YouTube, Discord, Threads, and any emerging or similar platforms.

Staff must not establish or pursue personal friendships with any individual under the age of 18 who is not enrolled as a student at Denefield School. This includes refraining from any form of social or private contact that could compromise professional boundaries.

Even if a student initiates contact, staff should not respond. All electronic communication with students and parents must be via the school email account or approved school learning platform.

If staff maintain personal profiles on social media, they should avoid using their full name and ensure privacy settings are applied to restrict public access. Staff must not be friends (online or offline) with current students under 18 and are strongly advised not to be friends with recent students under 21. Communication with former students via social media should only occur if the individual is aged 18 or over.

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Staff must disclose to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and log any attempts by students to engage with them on social media or electronically.

Staff must not use personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students or their work. Where photos or recordings are required for school purposes, only school equipment should be used.

Staff must ensure that confidential or sensitive information is never disclosed to students, including avoiding displaying such information on whiteboards or in any location visible to students.

10. Recruitment and Appointment

Staff involved in recruitment and appointment must apply the school's recruitment and selection processes and ensure fairness and equality is applied at all times.

Where an employee is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, they must advise their line manager or Headteacher where they are closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g., close friend, relative).

Staff applying for a post or other work-related opportunity within the school (e.g., promotion, secondment) must not seek the help or influence of school trustees.

11. Dress and Presentation

The school expects its staff to dress in a formal manner that creates a good and professional impression (See the school's Staff Dress Code for Staff).

Personal protective equipment must be worn where required.

12. Safeguarding

All staff are responsible for following and adhering to the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff must inform the Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable if they are subject to a criminal investigation or have received a conviction, caution or have been banned from working with children.

All staff are expected to use the appropriate channels, as set out in the relevant procedures, to raise concerns about the practice of others if there is suspicion that their conduct has a negative impact on learning or causes harm to students.

Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites

- Taking photographs of students on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language
- Inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have with the designated safeguarding lead or with the Headteacher. Where a concern relates to the Headteacher it should be shared with the Chair of the trustees.

Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage them to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

13. Relationships with parents and carers

Staff should strive to establish productive relationships with parents and carers.

This includes providing parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress, involving parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education, considering their views and perspectives, and following the school policies on communication and involvement with parents and carers.

Where an interaction with a parent or carer becomes aggressive or offensive, the interaction should be ended politely and firmly, with assistance summoned where required. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any contact with parents/carers where aggression or violence is anticipated and the appropriate lone working procedures must be instigated.

14. Relationships with line manager

Staff and line managers should strive to maintain co-operative and effective working relationships which should be courteous, reasonable and fair at all times.

Staff should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions given by the line manager to the best of their ability.

Line managers should exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with school policies, contractual obligations and national standards.

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Line managers should use the appropriate performance management frameworks to appraise the performance of direct reports and provide feedback. Line managers should provide honest, accurate and justifiable comments when providing feedback, and encourage staff to undertake training and development opportunities, within the context of the school needs and budget.

Line managers must ensure direct reports are aware of, and have access to, the relevant policies and procedures that affect their work.

15. Working with school trustees

When working with trustees or dealing with enquiries from trustees, all staff are expected to be courteous and efficient. Staff should expect similar levels of courtesy from trustees.

Staff should use the appropriate school procedure (e.g. Grievance procedure) to deal with any work-related personal issues and should not engage trustees in such issues unless it is in accordance with a relevant procedure.

Similarly, staff should not use trustees to by-pass formal school procedures in any way, for example to influence the outcome of a disciplinary matter. This does not affect the rights of trade union representatives to take up matters on behalf of their members through appropriate channels, or for trustees to be formally involved in procedures where appropriate – for example, acting as a member of a trustee disciplinary appeal panel.

Staff must not try to influence trustees prior to any appointment/decision. This excludes providing views to trustees as part of an information-gathering or consultation exercise.

16. Working as part of a whole-school team

Staff should endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all school colleagues and to participate in whole-school development and improvement activities.

Staff should uphold all school policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the life or running of the school in an appropriate and responsible way.

Staff should recognise the important role of the school in the life of the community and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.

Staff should cooperate with other professionals in the children's workforce, establishing effective and productive relationships with other professional colleagues.

Staff should at all times ensure they act within their sphere of their own competence and responsibilities and seek clarification where this is needed.

17. Respect for diversity and promoting equality

All staff must act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their backgrounds, beliefs, abilities, preferences, values and identities.

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Staff must take responsibility for understanding and complying with school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying.

Staff should help to create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.

Staff should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from their line manager or Headteacher where issues are identified.

18. Working with money

Staff receiving or responsible for school money need to take particular care and must adhere to the appropriate financial procedures in the Financial Management Policy at all times.

Staff submitting claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure must ensure the correct procedures are followed, the details of the claim are within set limits and can be substantiated (e.g. with receipts).

19. Using the school's resources and premises

School equipment should not be used for personal use unless authorised by the Headteacher. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, computers and premises.

School ICT systems, particularly email and internet, should only be used for professional purposes. ICT passwords should be kept confidential at all times and not disclosed to any other individual.

20. Working Safely

All school staff and members of the Trust Board are responsible for ensuring that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.

Actions or omissions of any individual that place others in danger may lead to disciplinary action.

Staff are expected to:

- adhere to the school's health and safety policy and rules;
- advise the Headteacher/line manager/appropriate person of any unsafe situations or practices;
- take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of other staff, students and any other users of the school premises;
- wear any safety clothing/equipment and ensure all students are wearing and use appropriate equipment;
- report any injuries, accidents or near misses to the appropriate Responsible Person;
- report incidents of abusive/aggressive or bullying/threatening behaviour that is experienced or witnessed to the appropriate Responsible Person;

- advise line managers when taking any medication that could affect the ability to work safely; and
- comply with hygiene requirements.

21. Protecting the School and its standards

Where an employee has reason to suspect that colleagues, senior managers or trustees are acting improperly, the employee should report these suspicions to the Headteacher (or the chair of trustees if the suspicions concern the Headteacher). The employee will be assured the concerns, when made in good faith, will be heard without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy.

Improper conduct can cover a wide range, including financial irregularity, abuse of students, abuse of power or position, neglect of duty, discrimination, bullying or harassment in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy and the Fairness and Dignity at Work Policy.

Relationship to other policies

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Fairness and Dignity at Work Policy
- Data Protection E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- School Dress Code for Staff Policy
- Financial Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Finance Management Policy (Gifts section)
- Policy for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
- DfE Teachers' Standards July 2011 (updated December 2021)
- KCSIE
- Health and Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct for parents/carers and visitors

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APPENDIX 1

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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