

## CODE OF CONDUCT

WeST holds a deep seated belief in education and lifelong learning. Effective collaboration, mutual support and professional challenge will underpin our quest to ensure that all of the children and adults we serve are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Person(s) responsible for updating the policy:	Louise Rowe, HR Business Partner
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ADDENDUM – Employee Guidance Note – Social Media

### 1. Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards all employees are expected to observe. Employees working in Westcountry Schools Trust are role models, are in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the Trust. As a member of a school community, every employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Trust, whether inside or outside working hours.

Other policies referenced throughout this document are accessible via the staff pages of the WeST website.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, including teaching and support staff. This Code of Conduct does not form part of the contract of employment and any amendments will be made in consultation with Trade Unions.

Casual and self-employed workers, agency staff and volunteers working in the Trust would also be expected to observe the standards set out in this document.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under the 'Conditions of Service for Schools Teachers' (known as the Burgundy book) have a statutory obligation to adhere to the most recent 'Teachers' Standards' and the subsequent, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

### 2. Compliance

Employees must familiarise themselves and comply with all Trust policies and procedures.

Employees must complete the form in Appendix 2 to confirm they have read and understood the Code of Conduct. This form should then be signed and dated. The signed form will be confidentially stored on the employee's personnel record.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in a disciplinary investigation and action including but not limited to dismissal in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy and procedure.

### 3. Setting an Example

This Code helps all employees to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Employees must not discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Further details are available in the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

Employees must set good examples of behaviour and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same. Standards expected of employees can be found in Appendix 1.

Employees must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language and must avoid behaving in a way that humiliates students, discriminates against or favours students. Employees should consider their conduct so that misinterpretations by students are minimised.

Staff designated to lead student events (e.g. proms, residential visits) must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances both within the school premises and off-site. Staff attending student events off-site, but not part of the official supervision rota/risk assessment, may consume alcohol in moderation. However, they should apply professional

judgement and consider how their actions may be interpreted by students, parents and members of the public.

#### 4. Safeguarding Students

Employees have a duty to safeguard students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse and neglect. Employees must take reasonable care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

The duty to safeguard students includes the duty to report concerns about a student or colleague to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Employees are provided with access to the following documents and must become familiar with these:

- Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Trust's Whistleblowing Procedure
- The DfE Statutory Guidance Document 'Keeping children safe in education'
- The 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings'

All employees are required to undertake annual Child Protection Training and complete any revised updates that may arise during the year.

#### 5. Relationships with Students

It is paramount for employees to treat students with dignity, to build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times to observe proper boundaries appropriate for their professional position. Employees must have regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions and fundamental British values (such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs). In addition, employees should ensure that their personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability. Employees should also be mindful not to show favouritism to any student.

Employees should make every effort to ensure their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage in appropriate boundaries and be aware that infatuations may carry the risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Employees who have personal connections with students outside school (e.g. relatives, neighbours, members of local community/sports/religious/political etc.), will need to be particularly mindful to maintain relationships/boundaries which do not compromise professional standards and responsibilities.

Private tuition of students within the same school that the employee is based might cause a conflict of interest. Employees are discouraged from tutoring students from within the school they teach and must not tutor students they teach directly. It must also be made clear that any tutoring is a strictly private and external arrangement and unconnected to the school.

#### 6. Professional Relationships with Colleagues

Employees must help create a positive working environment and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. For further information please refer to the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure.

Employees must strive toward and promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such

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times it is expected that employees will attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case, they should refer the matter to their line manager. For further detail please refer in the first instance to the Dignity at Work Policy and, if it is not possible to resolve matters informally, the Grievance Policy.

Where a close personal relationship already exists or develops with another member of staff with the potential to create a conflict of interest, both parties should immediately declare this relationship to their line manager(s) who will, together with them, appraise the risks and identify possible options to avoid any conflict of interest.

Employees should also refer to the considerations of their responsibilities for related parties transactions as detailed in the financial policy arrangements.

### **7. Honesty and Integrity**

Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.

Employees must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer your concerns to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality from suppliers or associates of the Trust. A record should be kept of all gifts from children/students/parents with a value of over £30.

Staff should carefully consider any gifts received from or rewards given to children/students in the light of school policies and KCSiE. Staff are advised to use the school rewards system as their primary means of rewarding; however, small, informal rewards such as sweets, are acceptable. If staff are unsure about the status of gifts or rewards, they should consult their line manager.

Employees must make known to the Principal/Headteacher and Trust Board all financial and non-financial interests that could bring them into conflict with the Trust's interests.

All personal relationships with contractors, or potential contractors should be made known by the employee to the Principal/Headteacher, Trust Board and Senior Manager with responsibility for the contract.

Employees must not be involved in any recruitment process if they have a personal relationship with the applicant inside or outside of work. Further information on unconscious bias is available in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Without fear of recrimination, employees can report any impropriety or breach of procedures using the process laid out within the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

### **8. Conduct Outside of Work**

The Trusts recognises an employee's right to a private life. Employees should be mindful however of engaging in conduct that might bring into question their ability to effectively carry out their role. Where there is a question over the appropriateness of behaviour of an employee outside of work and its relevancy of the conduct to the workplace and/or the risk to the Trust's reputation an investigation will be carried out under the disciplinary policy.

Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

This includes criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs (subject to the employer's duty of care to employees who may have substance or dependency issues) or sexual misconduct.

### **9. Employment outside of the Trust**

Employees may undertake work outside of the Trust, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the Trust. In line with the Statement of Particulars, employees must declare and discuss secondary employment with their line manager.

### **10. E-Safety and Internet Use**

Employees should exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the Trust's policies and guidance on both ICT use and Social Media.

The Trusts recognises an employee's right to a private life. Employees should be mindful however of engaging in social media use that might bring into question their ability to effectively carry out their role. Where there is a question over the appropriateness of social media content and its relevancy of the conduct to the workplace and/or the risk to the Trust's reputation an investigation will be carried out under the disciplinary policy.

Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. Additional information is available in the addendum guidance note for all employees.

Employees should be mindful of their use of workplace equipment and software to ensure this does not disrupt their workflow.

Employees must not use equipment belonging to the Trust to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing pornographic images or links to them be brought into the workplace. Doing so will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the employee to continue to work in schools.

Employees must not respond to negative comments posted online relating to the organisation or its stakeholders but bring this to the attention of the Principal/Headteacher/Director TLI.

Employees must only contact students via Trust authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

Employees must report to the Principal/Headteacher/Director TLI any contact by a student by an inappropriate route.

Photographs/still images or video footage of students should only be taken using Trust equipment, for purposes authorised by the school/Trust. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Trust's procedures on Trust equipment.

### **11. Confidentiality**

Employees must not reveal confidential information about students or their parents or carers except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student.

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Employees are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student (or by another employee), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school/Trust, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with Trust colleagues except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

### **12. Dress and Appearance**

Employees may dress comfortably but must also dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.

Employees must not dress in a manner that could be regarded by others as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. Employees must not wear clothes with political or other contentious slogans.

If your post requires you to wear protective clothing or use to equipment, then you must adhere to the instructions provided by your line manager.

### APPENDIX 1 - Standards Expected of Employees

The standards expected of all employees include but are not limited to:

- maintaining standards of behaviour in keeping with the interests and standing of the school and Trust. This includes behaviour outside of working hours and in any form that is visible to the public, including social networking or any other electronic medium.
- devoting full attention while at work to the duties of their position and in doing so acting with responsibility, good judgement and in good faith
- carrying out any reasonable instructions given by those with authority to do so.
- not divulging to any unauthorised person or making personal use of confidential information connected with the Trust, either intentionally or through negligent behaviour.
- observing the rules, regulations and instructions adopted by the Trust.
- following appropriate safeguarding procedures.
- participating fully in any investigation into alleged incidents and/or allegations, including attending meetings as directed.
- using electronic communications appropriately.
- carrying out their role consistently with any standards set by their appropriate professional body.
- In addition to the above, the expectations of those employed in management roles are to:
  - ensure the standards expected from all employees are role-modelled, monitored and managed effectively
  - effectively manage all applicable statutory and non-statutory obligations
  - appropriately manage all alleged incidents and/or allegations.

This list is not exhaustive.



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### APPENDIX 2 - Confirmation of Compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the Trust's code of conduct.

Name .....

Position/Post Held.....

Signed .....

Date .....

**Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Principal / Headteacher / Director TLI. The completed form will be stored on the personnel file of the employee.**

### POLICY HISTORY

<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>Summary of Change</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Version / Implementation Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
04/12/2019	New policy	WeST HR	12/12/2019	December 2021