

Manor Park
Primary School



Code of Professional Conduct Policy

DATE OF LAST REVIEW:	SEPTEMBER 2021
SHARED WITH STAFF:	SEPTEMBER 2021
SHARED WITH GOVERNORS:	SEPTEMBER 2021
FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:	3-YEARLY
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	SEPTEMBER 2024

**Professional Code of Conduct for all Members of Staff Taken from Model Code of
Conduct Issued by Coventry City Council**

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1. Introduction

1.1 This model code of conduct, as adopted, applies to all those employed in schools and centrally employed teachers. N.B. For Central Teachers, applicable HR policies referred to within this document, will be Corporate HR Policies.

1.2 This code is designed to set out required standards and help employees understand the working relationship between themselves, their managers, colleagues, pupils and members of the public to whom they deliver a service.

1.3 Employees must comply with this Code as it forms part of their terms and conditions of employment. The School and City Council believe that employees are responsible for their actions. Head Teachers, Governors and Line Managers will ensure that staff are fully briefed on the content and have access to a copy of the Code of Conduct, it is however the responsibility of all employees to read the Code. If any of the provisions contained within the Code of Conduct, related Codes of Practice or Policies are not fully understood, then the employee must, in their own interest, seek clarification from their Line Manager.

1.4 Head Teachers must ensure that current HR advice/guidance referred to throughout this document is accessible for all staff employed within the school

1.5 If an employee's actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code, then the School/City Council may take formal disciplinary action which may include the full range of disciplinary sanctions. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside of working hours, which bring the School/City Council into disrepute or impact on the employee's ability to carry out their role, may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken, in accordance with the School and City Council's procedures.

N.B. In order to practice in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools and pupil referral units, teachers are required to register with the General Teaching Council. The GTC code outlines the minimum standards expected of a teacher both professionally and personally. It aims to set out the values, beliefs and attitudes which underpin the professionalism of all teaching staff. (Please see full details within the staff handbook)

2. General Principles

2.1 All employees are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in order to give the highest possible standards of service and avoid any conduct which could compromise them and the School/City Council. Therefore, this code sets out required standards as referred to in 1.2 above.

2.2 Employees should comply with the rules and procedures set by the School and City Council in relation to actions and behaviours. These can be found in school documents, and on the Coventry Learning Gateway (CLG). Each school has a 'log-in' and 'password' which an employee's Line Manager can provide.

2.3 Employees working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a position of great trust. Serious breaches of that trust; assault or sexual misconduct or deliberate disregard of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of School / Council services will be regarded as potential gross misconduct.

2.4 Employees have a responsibility for ensuring a safe learning environment for children and young people within the school.

2.5 Employees who believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or individual pupils, should raise the matter with the Head Teacher who is also the designated person for child protection (Please refer to The Allegations of Child Abuse Policy latest guidance within the HR Handbook on the CLG).

2.6 Employees should have regard to the School's Behaviour Management Policy to provide guidance and support in dealing with behaviour issues as they arise.

2.7 Employees should not demean or undermine pupils, their parents, carers or colleagues or display any discriminatory behaviour.

2.8 Employees should comply with statutory provisions, which support the well-being and development of pupils.

2.9 Employees must not enter into a personal relationship with pupils at the school or conduct improper relationships with pupils through, for example mobile phone, e-mail and Internet chat rooms/websites.

2.10 Employees should not bring the reputation and standing of the Council/School into disrepute.

3. Working Relationships

3.1 All employees have a right to be treated with dignity at work. Staff should always respect their colleagues, the pupils and the reputation of the School/Council. (Also refer to Dignity at Work – Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy – latest guidance within the HR Handbook on the CLG)

3.2 All employees are expected to follow the School's/City Council's policies on equality and diversity (available within the school and on the CLG). All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, sexuality, age, gender, political affiliation or membership of a trade union are unacceptable.

3.3 All forms of bullying, including threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the school/Council. Please refer to the School's/Council's Dignity at Work – Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Grievance Procedure (latest guidance within the HR Handbook on the CLG).

3.4 If there are work related issues, which cannot be resolved informally with another colleague, the Line Manager should be advised. Also refer to the School's/Council's Grievance Procedure (latest guidance on the CLG).

3.5 Employees should not be involved in decisions relating to any discipline, promotion, performance development review, or pay progression of any employee who is a relative, or with whom they have a close personal relationship. If an employee develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise they should notify their Line Manager/HR Provider.

3.6 Employees should maintain an effective and professional working relationship with their colleagues and Line Manager. Also refer to paragraph 14 and the Whistleblowing Policy.

3.7 Employees should participate in initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

3.8 School/Council/Statutory policies, procedures and codes of practice should be followed at all times.

3.9 An employee should never conceal a matter that should be reported, or damage, alter or falsify any document, form or record.

3.10 It is the responsibility of the employee that if their personal circumstances change, i.e. change of address or home telephone number, they should inform a member of the school's office and their Line Manager and make the relevant changes via Resource Link or inform Employment Services if necessary.

4. Working with Children and Young People

4.1 Infatuations

Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. When this does occur, words or actions may be misinterpreted. An employee, who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their line manager so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

4.2 Social Contacts

4.2.1 Employees should not seek to have social contact with a child or young person or their families unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with their Line Manager. If a parent or child seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the employee should exercise their professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their Line Manager. Such examples could be related to internet social networking sites (i.e. being asked to be a 'friend' on 'Facebook')

4.2.2 Employees should gain permission from their Line Manager if there is a need for them to give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to a child or young person. Under normal circumstances this would be discouraged because of the potential implications from such an action. The process of gaining permission examines the reason for the need and allows it to be 'noted' - in the interest of seeking to protect the employee.

4.3 Physical Contact

4.3.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for employees to have some physical contact with the child or young person with whom they are working, for example those who teach PE, Games, Drama or who offer music tuition. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, employees should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

4.3.2 When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

4.3.3 In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, employees should sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries and must always report such circumstances to their Line Manager.

Sexual Contact

It is an offence for a person over 18 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. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact it may also include non-contact activities.

4.4.2 Any sexual activity between an employee and a child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

5. Working and Contact with the Media

5.1 Employees should refer requests for this type of 'information' to their Line Manager in the first instance. Employees who write or give interviews must ensure that they make it clear that they are not representing the School's/Council's view and do not bring the School or Council into disrepute. Also refer to the Whistleblowing Policy (on the CLG).

5.2 They should not publicise material which is confidential or against the School's/Council's/any employee's interest.

6. Working with Councillors and Political Neutrality

6.1 Employees should never directly or indirectly seek the support of any Councillor when they are making an application for further employment within the City Council.

6.2 Employees must not use members to bypass formal Council procedures in any way.

6.3 If an employee develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise they should notify their Line Manager.

6.4 Employees must not allow their personal or political opinions to interfere with their work. Certain posts are 'politically restricted' and subject to statutory requirements. Teachers, Head teachers and Lecturers are exempt from political restrictions under s2 (10) LGHA, and will not be regarded as holding a politically restricted post whatever their role or remuneration level. Further information can be obtained from Human Resources.

Working and the Law

6.5 Employees have a duty at all times to uphold the law.

6.6 Teaching is a notifiable occupation, which means that the police report any conviction or caution given to a teacher to the Department for Education (DFE). Offences involving a risk of harm to children or to vulnerable adults are considered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). All other convictions and cautions are passed to the General Teaching Council (GTC), which has a role in determining if a caution or criminal offence is relevant to a teacher's registration.

6.7 An employee should inform their Line Manager if they are charged with any offence, including driving offences and if they receive any criminal conviction. The Line Manager will then consider if any follow up action is necessary and decide if the matter should be referred and considered at a disciplinary hearing. Some offences would be classed as serious and would fall under the definition of gross misconduct. (Also refer to the Disciplinary Procedure on the CLG).

6.8 Employees must comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of pupil achievement and attainment. They must not alter, falsify or add to; scripts for SAT's, coursework or moderating marks submitted for GCSE examination, and should not provide unauthorised photocopies of forthcoming examination papers to students Working Safely.

6.9 It is the duty of all employees to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others who are affected by what they do or do not do. They should also ensure that they keep up to date with health and safety guidance as provided by the employer. (Also refer to the Health and Safety Policy and Hygiene Regulations within the School).

6.10 Employees working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. They should therefore assess the need to have another adult present, and consider the location and facilities to ensure their own security and safety and that of the child/young person. (Also see 'Working Alone [with children, young people or adults] on the CLG)

6.11 An employee should use any safety clothing and equipment provided by the employer that is needed in their role and ensure that the equipment is not misused, neglected or damaged.

6.12 An employee must report any accident or "near misses" they have at work as soon as possible and accurately complete an accident report form, this includes verbal and physical assaults.

6.13 Employees must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their health and safety. (Also refer to 'Policy & Guidance on Educational Visits' available within the School).

6.14 Alcohol should not be consumed during the working day. Employees should make sure that if they do drink alcohol at any time when they are off duty, it does not affect their ability to carry out their work or in any way damage the reputation of the School. (Also refer to the Addiction Policy & Capability Policy on the CLG)

6.15 Employees should not take any non-medical substance, such as drugs, that may affect their performance at work. Prescribed drugs may be taken but if a GP gives an employee any medication that may have a negative effect on their performance, they should tell their Line Manager in confidence. The use of illegal substances may not only result in formal action, including the possibility of summary dismissal, but may also be reported to the police. (Also refer to the Addiction Policy & Capability Policy on the CLG).

6.16 The Council operates a No Smoking Policy. This applies to all Council premises and those where Council services are provided. It also applies when transporting service users in Council or private vehicles and to visits to service users in their own homes or other establishments. Smoking is strictly prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions.

9. Gifts

9.1 An employee's actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and must not give the impression to another member of staff, parent, pupil or service user that they are influenced in this way.

9.2 Employees should only accept gifts of a modest and token value (i.e. less than £10). Employees should not accept a gift of hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the School or may be seeking employment with the School. Employees should decline any offer of hospitality if they think the giver has an ulterior motive.

9.3 If employees accept any bribes from an individual (e.g. parent) that provides either the School or Coventry City Council with goods or services, they may be guilty of corruption. Employees should inform their Head Teacher/Line Manager if anyone tries to bribe them or if there is evidence of improper behaviour by others.

9.4 The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. The giving of a personal gift for a specific reason is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the employee has first discussed this with their Line Manager.

9.5 Employees should be cautious when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

10 Working with Integrity

10.1 If a school wishes to sponsor an event or service, no employee, relative or friend should benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to, and prior approval by the Head teacher/Line Manager.

10.2 Employees are required to declare to the Line Manager, any pecuniary interests which could conflict with the School's/Council's interests, including any Directorships or equivalent position, which they may hold.

10.3 Deliberately giving false information on claims such as mileage, travel/ subsistence allowances, self-certification forms or attendance records will be deemed as fraud. All documents/forms/records should be completed honestly.

10.4 Activities/private interests/outside employment, which employees may participate in when they are not at work, must not bring Coventry City Council or the School into disrepute. Employees should not put themselves in a position which could result in public confidence in the School/Council being weakened.

11 Working with Money and Property

11.1 Employees should ensure that they use school funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner.

11.2 Financial and Accounting procedures within the School and the Council should be followed at all times.

11.3 The School's property such as stationery, photocopiers etc. may be used for School business only, unless permission has been given for other use. Facilities such as telephones, mobile phones, Internet, e-mail and other ICT facilities can only be used in accordance with the School/Council policy e.g. use of facilities by recognised trade unions and/or with the permission of the Line Manager.

11.2 Employees should follow Coventry City Council's policy and procedures on computer virus protection. A virus, which is maliciously hidden in a programme, can corrupt and damage computer files and discs. Employees need to be made aware that if they knowingly introduce a computer virus, this is not just a contravention of expected behaviour within their employment, they are breaking the law.

11.3 Employees should ensure that they follow the schools security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. Employees should never share a password or similar security device that may lead to unauthorised access to the Schools systems or property.

11.4 Employees should gain proper prior approval from the owner of the copyright before copying computer programmes (software) and other literature for personal use as it is an offence (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988).

11.5 Employees should return any property or equipment which they have been allowed to borrow by the school as soon as they leave their job or when requested by their Line Manager.

12. Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters

12.1 If employees are involved in recruitment and selection they are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the School's/Council's recruitment and selection process. Employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him/her.

12.2 Any reference provided by a line manager in relation to another employee on behalf of the School/City Council, whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee.

12.3 Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience, nor should they falsify a reference.

13. Outside Commitments and Private Work

13.1 Employees should notify their Line Manager before taking up an outside employment. The Line Manager should assess if the nature of the work might be seen to conflict with the interests of the School/Council and advise accordingly.

13.2 Any secondary employment cannot be carried out by employees during the time the school employs them (i.e. when they should be in attendance at the school/undertaking work for the school under their contract of employment for those specific hours), which includes periods of sickness absence.

13.3 Employees should follow the appropriate guidance as referred to in Para 11.6 on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

14. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

14.1 Employees may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. They should gain the permission of the Line Manager before disclosing this information to any unauthorised party, in order to protect the employee from any accusations of inappropriate use.

14.2 Information held by the School in relation to staff and pupils may be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act. Employees should never put themselves in the position where the disclosure of information puts themselves, a colleague, a pupil or the reputation of the school/service at risk.

14.3 Employees should respect the confidentiality of School/Service meetings and the contents of any confidential School/Service documents.

15. Being a Member of an Organisation

15.1 Employees should ensure that their membership or involvement with any external organisation does not lead to an actual or perceived (maybe because of its nature and maybe because it is in the 'public domain') conflict of interest with their position as an employee of the school, or conflict with the school's policies/objectives or damage to the school's reputation. It is important to avoid any perception that advice, guidance, or decisions for which they are responsible could be influenced by their membership of a particular organisation. This does not apply to membership of a trade union.

16. Whistleblowing

16.1 Under the Whistleblowing policy and procedure, if an employee believes that there has been any fraud, irregularity, improper behaviour towards a pupil, corruption or the law has been broken, they should report such incidents under this policy. Refer to the Whistleblowing Policy within the School.

16.2 The Whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns safely and without fear of retribution within the School/Council rather than overlooking a problem. The School/Council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect any employee when they have raised a concern in good faith.

Similarly no employee must treat another employee less favourably on the grounds that that employee has, intends, or is suspected of doing anything under the Whistleblowing procedures.

17. Low level concerns

What is a low level concern?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – **no matter how small**, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that any such concerns, are shared responsibly and with the Head teacher, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Where there are concerns/allegations about the Head teacher, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors (whose contact details can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy document).

Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

18. Review.

This code of conduct will be kept under review in the light of recommendations and guidance issued nationally in relation to standards of conduct in public life and revised as necessary.