

Appendix 3 – Shefford Lower School Code of Conduct for Employees

1. PURPOSE

This Code sets out the principles relating to the manner, approach and behaviours that should be observed by all employees of Shefford Lower School, in order to ensure conduct of the highest order and that pupils, parents, the community and colleagues have and maintain confidence and trust in the integrity of those working for the school. This Code **forms part of the terms and conditions of service of employment** for all employees in the school and should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young Adults in Education Settings (Appendix 1), which provides further advice and detail.

2. DISPOSITIONS AND ATTITUDES

All staff are expected to support the school's aims and policies and to work in a manner conducive to the school's ethos and values. In addition to the further points referred to in this document, this includes:

- Making every effort to attend work and be punctual unless there is a valid, authorised reason for their absence.
- Fulfilling their duties to the best of their ability, asking for support when needed.
- Taking responsibility for their professional development, which will be agreed taking into account key school priorities as well as their personal development and aspirations.
- Making a full contribution to the life of the school; bringing forward suggestions for improvement, new ideas, attending school events and supporting children's activities within and beyond the classroom.
- Being flexible and having a positive attitude to helping where needed.
- Being supportive of each other and working together to help to maintain a whole school team ethos.
- Taking pride in our school and in your classroom and keeping it, and other areas of the school, well presented and tidy.

3. SCOPE

The Code covers the following areas:-

- 3) General Principles
- 4) Responsibilities of Employees
- 5) General Standards in Dealing with People
- 6) Relationships with Pupils, Parents and Governors
- 7) Child Protection
- 8) Prevent
- 9) Position of Trust
- 10) Equality of Opportunities for All
- 11) Conflicts of Interests & Work outside the School
- 12) Awarding Contracts
- 13) Hospitality and Acceptance of Gifts

- 14) Commercial Confidentiality
- 15) Criminal Offences
- 16) Driving Disqualifications
- 17) Use of School Facilities
- 18) Dress Code
- 19) Sanctions for Breach of the Code
- 20) Where to Obtain Further Advice

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The adoption of a Code of Conduct means that the standards and expectations of all school employees are transparent and equitable. The Code constitutes part of employees' terms and conditions of employment, and will therefore be monitored and enforced, if necessary, through normal procedural arrangements agreed by the Governing Body. This Code therefore, is designed to set out standards of conduct and behaviour in order that employees themselves and the school community can be sure of the parameters and standards required of employees in such a manner that there will be confidence and trust in the employee working practices.
- 3.2 This Code identifies those key areas of conduct and behaviour, setting out standards and guidance for employees. It is supported by all employment procedures, protocols and the Staff/Personnel Handbook as adopted by the Governing Body. The areas highlighted in this Code are not exhaustive, and employees should endeavour to be seen as setting the highest standards of conduct in a way that does not bring any disrepute on themselves as a school employee, the service they work within, or the school/Trust/Luton Borough Council in general.
- 3.3 All employees in the school are undertaking a professional role to support the education of young people. As such they are all role models and are expected to act accordingly. This includes relationships and communication with colleagues and the school, adherence to the school's dress code, appropriate for the job, and activities in the community outside school.
- 3.4 All employees should ensure that their behaviour and performance meet work place standards at any time that the school/Trust/Council, is being represented or is likely to be identified or associated with the role.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are not placed in a position which risks, or appears to risk, conflict between their private interests and their contractual duties. It is for the employee always to be impartial and honest in the conduct of their official business and with their own dealings with the school, and to notify the Governing Body of any change in their circumstances/interests that may impact in any way upon their employment, within the school/Trust, or upon the Council in general. (Examples of situations may be where the employee recommends a contractor for services without declaring any potential pecuniary interest or where an employee has been

involved in some criminal conviction in relation to his/her private life/interests that may have a connection/bearing upon the job he/she does).

- 4.2 Employees are subject to adherence to the school's policies and procedures, The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and are expected to use any public funds that are entrusted to them in the best way possible for the school and its community.
- 4.3 Teachers are reminded that they must adhere to the Teachers' Standards (updated July 2021), and these form part of teachers terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.4 It is also the responsibility of the headteacher to monitor, where practical, that employees are conforming to this Code and to ensure that employees are fully aware of its contents.

5. GENERAL STANDARDS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE

- 5.1 In the course of carrying out their duties, employees are required and expected to treat all people, with whom they have dealings, in a courteous, polite, unbiased and respectful manner. It is recognised that given certain circumstances, there will be occasions where dialogue may become strained. Employees should then bring the discussion to a close and seek support from the headteacher/colleagues in accordance with the relevant school procedure (e.g. Behaviour Policy, Complaints Procedure). Employees who are faced with abusive/violent situations are always advised, particularly where there is potential danger to themselves or others, to politely withdraw or disengage themselves from the situation.
- 5.2 Employees are required to maintain a good standard of dialogue and must refrain from using abusive, derogatory, offensive or socially unacceptable language in the course of their duties and dealings with all people, including pupils. In addition, body language that may be construed as aggressive, threatening or offensive must be avoided at all times.
- 5.3 This Code must be read in conjunction with the school's **Disciplinary Procedure** that sets out standards that will be treated as misconduct and liable for action to be taken under that procedure.

6 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS, PARENTS AND GOVERNORS

- 6.1 Employees are required to maintain professional relationships at all time.
- 6.2 All employees within the school have a responsibility:
 - For ensuring that the school is a safe environment.
 - to treat pupils, parents, volunteers, visitors, trainees, other professionals and Governors with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a professional position.

- for the safeguarding of pupil well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
 - to maintain good relationships with pupils.
 - for showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
 - to ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 6.3 All employees are expected to follow the policy and procedures adopted by the Governing Body.
- 6.4 The following school policies particularly apply, and all employees must ensure that they have read and understood them:
- 1) Internet and E-mail Acceptable Use Policy
 - 2) Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young Adults in Education Settings
 - 3) Guidance on physical Intervention
 - 4) Supporting Pupils at School with medical conditions & Administration of Medicine Policy
- 6.5 Employees with a grievance against a work colleague, or Headteacher, will not seek to influence the outcome by making advance representations to the Governing Body, but will follow the schools **Grievance Procedure**, adopted by the Governing Body.

7 CHILD PROTECTION

- 7.1 There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:
- To take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised and
 - To take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies, as soon as the issue comes to your attention.

Further detail and guidance for staff in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection is contained in the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young Adults in Education Settings and Safeguarding and child Protection Policy.

- 7.2 Staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to the headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy DSL) or to the Chair of Governors if the concern is about the headteacher. Where the concern is about a professional, the procedure employees must follow is the **"Where school employees face allegations of child abuse"**. Failure by workers in the school to report abuse, or suspected abuse, in accordance with this and other school child protection procedures, constitutes a breach of their 'duty of care'.

7.3 The school has adopted a **Whistleblowing Procedure** which enables workers in the school to report concerns that are in the public interest, including those relating to child protection issues, and those workers are protected, in certain circumstances, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

7.4 Failure to carry out duties in compliance with arrangements made by the LA or governing body will invoke the school's disciplinary procedure.

8. PREVENT

8.1 All workers are expected to have due regard for the statutory provision under the Prevent Duty, updated 2023. Under the duty, workers must build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling pupils to challenge extremist views.

8.2 Workers in the school should report concerns regarding any pupil, or other workers (including Volunteers, visitors) who are demonstrating extremist views and/or behaviours, or are suspected of becoming radicalised. Staff must report their concern, as per the Safeguarding Procedure to the headteacher/Designated Child Protection Officer or to the Chair of Governors, if the concern is about the headteacher. Failure to do so may constitute a breach of the 'duty of care' and the employee may face disciplinary action.

9. POSITION OF TRUST

9.1 A relationship of power and trust exists between all staff and pupils, their families or carers. Employees represent the powers and duties of the school. They are placed in a position of trust to assist in the delivery of education to pupils who may be vulnerable. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure they do not abuse or appear to abuse that position of trust in the way they conduct their relationships with service users, their families or carers. Relationships that are thought to be at risk of, or have already extended beyond, what may be considered professional are not acceptable.

9.2 The key characteristic of the professional relationship is that the sole objective is meeting the assessed needs of pupils within agreed school policies that prevail at any given time. At no point must the needs of the employee, unrelated to professional practice, take precedence. Emotional involvement or behaviour that is, or may be seen to be (by a reasonable person), primarily in employee interests, rather than meeting the assessed needs of service users, may be defined as extending beyond the professional role.

9.3 Unless there is sound reason to do so, and the action is taken with the express knowledge and approval of the headteacher, and the decision is officially recorded:

- an employee must not make personal arrangements to see service users, pupils, their carers or families outside directed or contracted hours

- an employee must not take service users, their carers or families to their home
- an employee must not give their telephone number or address to service users, their carers or families
- an employee must neither sell nor buy property from service users, their families or carers (the school will identify what this might reasonably include)*

9.4 Some examples of specific behaviour that will not be allowed and which may lead to disciplinary action include:

- sexual contact
- lending/borrowing money or property
- witnessing wills or acting as a named executor
- arranging extra help for a fee
- giving or receiving gifts

Whether motivated by a desire to support pupils, or less well intentioned or illegal motives, all such behaviour presents a risk to the professional relationship.

9.5 This position of trust also has consequences for actions and behaviours outside of working hours. Examples could be where an employee working with children:

- engage in activity or associating with individuals or people, whose current or past behaviours could raise doubts or concerns about an employee's own integrity or ability to be in a 'position of trust' with regard to children this could have a direct consequence on their ability to continue in employment/role, as a current relationship with an individual, or is known to associate with individuals, who have convictions for child abuse. The employer may not have raised any concern regarding their activity at work but their out of work relationships would call into question their position of trust and may be considered as bringing the Council into disrepute.
- has communicated with children, in a manner that could be deemed to be inappropriate.

9.6 It is difficult to give the full list of potential conflict of interest, but the simple test is to ask the question:

"If this issue became public knowledge, could it raise questions about my integrity and could it bring the school/council into disrepute?"

If the answer is "yes" or "possibly" or "I'm not sure" the employee is obliged to raise it with the headteacher so that this matter can be given further consideration

10. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

- 10.1 The school/Trust, and local authority, are committed to ensuring people receive equal treatment in all aspects of service delivery and employment activities. Employees therefore, in all aspects of their work, must ensure that they treat no individual less favourably than any other. Colleague employees, service users, local citizens and the general public must be treated with dignity and respect.
- 10.2 Employees should make sure that they are familiar with the school's policy in respect of **Equal Opportunities**, which can be found in the Safer Recruitment and Policy, and in relation to the **policy and procedure for Harassment and Bullying for all employees**, these must be read in conjunction with this Code.
- 10.3 Everyone should make reasonable efforts to develop and maintain appropriate skills in valuing diversity.

11. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & WORK OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

- 11.1 All employees, no matter what level of pay are advised not to engage in outside activities whether paid or unpaid that may conflict with their school work, or be detrimental to it. All employees are advised to seek permission from the headteacher in relation to undertaking such activities, and it will be for the headteacher/Governing Body to determine whether the interest of the school is likely to be harmed.
- 11.2 It is difficult to give a definitive list of potential conflicts of interest, but the simple test is to ask the question; "If this issue became public knowledge could it raise questions about my integrity and could it bring the school into disrepute?" If so, permission should be sought, if not permission will not be required.
- 11.3 Where the activity is paid the employee should ensure they notify the Head teacher so that the school can meet its responsibilities regarding the Working Time Directive and Health & Safety and any other legal responsibilities. Once the Head has considered the likely impact, if it is detrimental to the school permission will not be given.

12. AWARDING CONTRACTS

- 12.1 The school/Trust/Council wishes to ensure that in awarding contracts, fair and open competition prevails at all times. This means therefore that:-
- No private, public or voluntary organisation or company which may bid for school business should be given any advantage over its competitors, such as advance notice of the school's requirements. This applies to potential contractors, whether or not there is a relationship between them and the school, such as a long running series of contracts.
 - Each new contract must be awarded on merit, taking into account the requirements of the school and the ability of the contractor to fulfil them.

- No special favour should be shown to current or former employees or their close relatives, friends or associates, or governors in awarding contracts to private or other businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or managerial capacity. Contracts may be awarded to such businesses where they are won in fair and open competition against other tenders or quotations, but scrupulous care must be taken to ensure that the selection process is conducted impartially, and that employees/governors who are known to have a relevant interest play no part in the selection.
- In compliance Council Policy the Governing Body will ensure that all invitations to potential contractors to tender for Council business include a notice warning tenderer of the consequences of engaging in any corrupt practices involving employees of the school/Council.

12.2 Employees therefore should ensure that where they believe that there may be a potential conflict of interest in the selection of any contractor, that they should inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors to determine/clarify the level of their involvement in the selection process.

12.3 Employees' attention is also drawn to the issue of influencing, or potentially attempting to influence, the decision as to whether a person who is related, or known to an employee, is offered a contract of employment with the school. In the event that a relative applies for a post with the school, the applicant must record their relationship as a part of the application form. Likewise, the employee is required to inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors in writing of his/her relationship and should ensure that they do not take part in, or attempt to influence in any way, the selection recruitment process. Employees are advised, that where anyone who is "closely" known to them outside of the school, applies for a post within the school, that they should not become involved in any way with the selection process for that particular post.

13. HOSPITALITY AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

13.1 The Local Government Act 1972 states that an employee shall not under colour of his office or employment accept any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration (i.e. salary/pay).

13.2 Recognising that the interests of the school/Council must remain paramount at all times and that employees should not use their official position for private gain, employees should not accept gifts, inducements or promotional offers for their personal use or that of colleagues. Casual gifts from pupils or offered by contractors or others, for example at Christmas or the end of term time, which may not in any way be connected with the performance of duties so as to constitute an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts, need not necessarily be refused, but if there is any concern that the donor (for example a parent, supplier or contractor) may be trying to gain favour then they should be politely and firmly refused or employees should seek guidance from the School Business Manager.

- 13.3 Employees should not, for personal gain or benefit, solicit, accept or request payment by way of money, goods, services, discounts or any other means from any school/Council agent, contractor, supplier or a member of the public. Nor should an employee accept or request payment from any pupil at the school, unless this arrangement is agreed by the headteacher/Governing Body and is for the financial benefit of the school.
- 13.4 No employee is entitled to retain on a personal basis any goods, gifts, money or service discounts which are a normal purchase or promotional offer to the school. Where gifts are received which are the subject of a normal purchase or promotional offer, or where a gift is made and the donor refuses to take the gift back, these must be reported immediately to the headteacher. The employee must ensure that these gifts have been recorded as received in the appropriate "Gifts and Hospitality" record book held within the school. If any employee is unsure whether the acceptance of hospitality is likely not to be in the school's interest, they should seek the advice of the headteacher/Chair of Governors in the first instance.
- 13.5 Any employee who is approached by a firm offering inducements, or who believes that they have inadvertently committed the school contractually for supplies and services that are not in the best interests of the school, must immediately notify the headteacher.
- 13.6 The school's delegated budget must not be used for hospitality which is lavish, extravagant or exceeds modest proportions. The Governing Body has agreed parameters within which the headteacher may take financial decisions. Any employee likely to incur such expenditure must seek the approval of the headteacher first. Any expenditure outside the limit set by the Governing Body must be referred to the appropriate committee of the Governing Body for ratification.

14. COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY/DATA PROTECTION

- 14.1 Employees must not make public, without the express agreement of the headteacher/Chair of Governors as part of the normal processes of the school, any internal information that they may be aware of as part of their employment with the school/Council, whether or not this is for personal gain, or the personal or financial gain of others. This is particularly important where it may prejudice the principle of a purchasing or a contracting system based on fair competition. Employees are also bound by the Data Protection Act in not releasing to a third party, other than for internal purposes as part of normal work requirements, any information held in respect of any employee or person who has dealings with the school/Council for any reason.

15. CRIMINAL OFFENCES

- 15.1 In many instances the conviction of an employee for a criminal offence remains a matter between the individual and the Criminal Justice System. In respect of teachers such convictions may be notified to the General Teaching Council which, in turn, may notify the Council. However certain crimes or the fact that they have

been committed by certain employees do have a direct or indirect impact on individuals' employment with the school/Council which either constitutes a conflict of interest or brings the school/Council into disrepute or renders continuing employment in the job unlawful.

15.2 Examples of crimes that are likely to fall into this category include:

- any crime against the Council or a Public Body, e.g. Housing Benefit fraud, damage to the Council's property, or abuse of, or assault upon any Council employee (whether or not they are undertaking their duties at the time)
- any crime involving dishonesty/fraud if the employee's post involves responsibilities for budgets/cash/non-cash monies/ assets or where s/he has access to vulnerable people in a lone-working situation or manages contracts
- any crime or spent crime if the employee is working directly with, or has regular unsupervised contact with children or young people under 18 years of age; those with mental impairment or those with a sight, hearing or speech impediment. (Note: disclosing all convictions does not necessarily mean action will be taken against the employee, as it will need to be viewed against the relevance or otherwise for the employee to be considered suitable to continue to undertake the particular job).
- crimes of assault where the employee is working directly with vulnerable clients
- any crime that is deemed to bring the school/Council into disrepute

This list of examples is not exhaustive.

15.3 Employees **must** inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors as soon as they receive a reprimand, warning, caution or are investigated, or arrested, or charged, or convicted of such crimes (on the next working day) and if arrested, must notify the headteacher/Chair of Governors of the development and outcome of the case immediately e.g. on the next working day.

15.4 In addition, employees should always notify the headteacher/Chair of Governors if there is any doubt as to whether or not they fall into such a category. In certain circumstances, employees should notify their line manager if an immediate family member who resides at the same address is also investigated, arrested, charged or convicted. One example could be where an employee working with children has a current relationship with an individual or is known to associate with individuals who have convictions for child abuse. The employer may not have raised any concern regarding their activity at work but their out of work relationships would call into question their position of trust and may be considered as bringing the school/Trust/Council into disrepute.

15.5 It should be noted that the term "conviction" includes a finding of guilt regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded.

- 15.6 Failure to notify the headteacher/Chair of Governors of a Police Investigation, arrest, charge or conviction will constitute ground for disciplinary action.
- 15.7 Where it is deemed that there is an adverse impact on their employment, the school's disciplinary procedure will be invoked. The school is not required to wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.

16. DRIVING DISQUALIFICATION

- 16.1 Employees, or whose job requires a driving licence, **must immediately** inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are disqualified from driving for medical or criminal reasons.
- 16.2 For those employees disqualified from driving on the grounds of medical reasons, reasonable efforts will be made to redesign the job to exclude the requirement to drive (temporarily or indefinitely). Where this means redeployment is to a job on lower remuneration, pay protection will be in accordance with the current policy or conditions of service and the school will make every effort to identify equivalent, alternative responsibilities regarding this.
- 16.3 For those employees disqualified from driving on the grounds of criminal reasons, reasonable efforts will be made to redesign or redeploy the employee role. Where this is possible, but results in a lower paid job, no pay protection will apply.

17. USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES

17.1 Facilities that are provided by the school and used by employees as part of their normal duties, must not be used, or abused by employees for their own private use or gain. This will cover all school property, for example telephones, computers, vehicles, safety equipment/clothing, tools, fax machines, franking machines, paper. etc. School property should not be taken home, or taken away from the normal place of work, unless prior permission has been given by an employee's immediate supervisor/manager or unless these are acceptable resources to fulfil the contractual requirements of the job at home (for example planning, preparation and marking).

17.2 This school anticipates the following resources may be used at home, by the **employee only**:

- Laptop computer
- Text books
- Mobile phone

17.3 Arrangements do exist, for employees in certain situations and without overly abusing the privilege, to use school telephones to make private calls.

18 DRESS CODE

18.1 A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. Staff should consider, however, the manner of their dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. Which may be different to in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks that they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation. Safer Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Adults in Educational settings para 11.1)

The school has agreed the following dress code as appropriate, in a professional capacity. This takes into account equality legislation.

- Staff at Shefford Lower School maintain a smart, professional appearance, setting an appropriate example to the children.
- Sportswear is appropriate for PE activities but not for general wear in school.
- Leggings are not allowed.
- Short skirts should not be worn.
- Jeans or jean type trousers are acceptable on designated 'non-uniform' days only and should never include ripped jeans.
- Trainers are only worn on PE days and suitable footwear should be worn at all times.
- Visible, pierced body jewellery should be kept to a single earring in each ear during working hours. Any other piercings, such as nose, should be a single stud. The wearing of pierced body jewellery for religious reasons will be discussed individually.
- Tattoos must be covered where possible and should not be offensive.
- Clothing should be absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- Spaghetti straps should not be worn.
- All shoes must have a back strap and should be suitable for the work undertaken.

19 SANCTIONS FOR THE BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

19.1 This Code of Conduct forms part of all employee's terms and conditions of appointment. Any breach of this Code therefore will be dealt with under the school's agreed disciplinary procedures, and may, subject to the seriousness of the breach, lead to a dismissal from the school. In cases where the breach is the subject of police investigation, the school will not wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.

19.2 Where inappropriate behaviour is by an individual engaged on a contract of services, or employees not subject to a disciplinary procedure e.g. those during their probationary period then their services with the school will be terminated following the probationary procedure.

20. WHERE TO OBTAIN FURTHER ADVICE

Any queries in respect of this Code or the related documents should be raised with the Headteacher.