



Cornerstone Academy Trust

Code of Conduct

Introduction

As a Trust, the Board of Trustees is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school staff. All staff in the school are expected to actively follow and support our mission statement:

**“Relevant, purposeful, enjoyable learning...
preparing children for today and for their future”**

The Trust expects all staff to comply with management and to conform to the Trust’s policies at all times. If these policies are disregarded or the employee behaves wrongly in some other way the Trust may discipline employees.

Disciplinary action can consist of a formal oral warning, a written warning, a final written warning, dismissal or, in the case of gross misconduct, summary dismissal.

This Code of Conduct document should be used in partnership with the Disciplinary Policy.

Purpose and Principles

PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts.

The guidance aims to:

- Keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided
- Assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice
- Support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided
- Support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken
- Support safer recruitment practice
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people
- Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions

- Adults should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document

Safeguarding Pupils

All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.

All employees should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

All employees must be aware of low level concerns, 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 or college 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 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

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; or,
- humiliating children.

Please read fully and ensure you are constantly familiar with the Trust's Child Protection policy and be aware of our systems for keeping children safe ensuring that you follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

Duty of Care

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and

intentions

- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

Honesty and Integrity

Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our Trust:

- Employees must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by managers or Trustees
- Employees uphold public trust in our Trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
 - Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well being, in accordance with statutory provisions
 - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Employees must treat all colleagues with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy at all times
- Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of the Trust's property and facilities.

Health and Safety

Please read fully and ensure you are constantly familiar with the Trust's Health and Safety policy.

Tackling discrimination

Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Equality and policy and Anti Bullying policy.

Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.

Professional boundaries and relationships

Employees in our Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals. It is a specific offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) 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.

Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.

Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.

Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

Confidentiality

- Where staff have access to confidential information about children or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the children.
- All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedure. It must not be discussed outside of school, including with the child's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the Trust except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter
- However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or their school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a child. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on information that they are told by the child.

Drugs and Alcohol

ALCOHOL

Alcohol intoxication is defined within this policy as at or above the UK legal limit for driving. Staff must ensure that they are not intoxicated by alcohol when they report for work or return to work, and that they remain free from alcohol whenever they are at work, when driving Trust vehicles or when driving on Trust business.

Staff must not consume alcohol during the working day. No alcohol may be drunk at any time on Trust premises or in Trust vehicles.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Staff must ensure that they are free of any illegal drugs when they report for work or return to work, and that they remain so whenever they are at work, when driving Trust vehicles or when driving on Trust business.

The use, possession, storage, transportation, promotion, distribution and/or sale of illegal drugs or drug equipment is forbidden during working time, in the workplace or at the worksite. The use of Trust telephony or IT systems at any time for these purposes is forbidden. The Trust may report any criminal activity. Decision making on this matter will involve the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees.

When it has reasonable grounds to suspect an individual of possessing illegal drugs. The CEO, accompanied by a Trustee, may search Trust property used by that individual, or the individual's personal property that is on Trust premises. Appropriate advice will be sought before conducting such a search.

PRESCRIBED OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

The Trust recognises that individuals may, on occasion, use prescribed or over the counter medicines which are unconnected with the abuse of drugs, but have the potential to cause impaired performance at work. In these circumstances, it is the individual's responsibility to read the label and to consider the potential consequences on their fitness for duty, if they have any concerns they should seek advice from a pharmacist or their GP.

Where the individual could reasonably expect that there may be effects on their work performance or the safety of themselves or others, they must advise the CEO.

The use, promotion, distribution and/or sale of prescription or over the counter medicines for non-medical purposes is forbidden during working time, in the workplace or at the worksite, as is the misuse of other substances, e.g. solvents, for mind altering purposes. The use of Trust telephone or IT systems at any time for these purposes is forbidden.

Data Protection

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority. If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to their line manager in the first instance.

We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being (i) unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK, the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998). Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems as set out in our Data Protection Policy. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Officer, in order (where applicable) for relevant breaches to be reported to the Information Commissioners Office within 72 hours.

Employees must read and understand our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies including in relation to criminal records information, recruitment and safer recruitment, internet, email and communications and information security.

Media Relations

Responses to any enquiries relating to the Trust from the media, including national or local press/publications, TV and/or radio, should be addressed to the CEO or the Chair of Trustees. Responses to requests for personal media interviews received by a member of staff as a consequence

of their position at the Trust should also be cleared with the CEO or the Chair of Trustees, as should all material distributed externally which may be taken as an expression of the views of the Trust.

Dress Code

Staff must dress appropriately for work in school. Further details of items of clothing that are acceptable or not can be found in the Dress Code Policy.

Working in our Trust employees are role models to our students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable, they will be informed.

Environment

Your working environment should be kept tidy and organized and should not present any significant danger or hazard to any person, child or adult.

Staff are expected to maintain responsibility for their personal belongings at all times while on Trust premises or taking part in any school activities, such as trips. The Trust is not liable for any loss, theft, or damage to personal property. Staff should ensure that their belongings are stored securely and are not disruptive to the workplace environment and not left in places where they might be vulnerable. Staff are strongly advised against bringing items of significant or sentimental value into the Trust.

Any electrical items brought into the Trust should meet all health and safety requirements and it is the staff members responsibility to ensure this.

Should staff bring any items into the Trust, for purposes of supporting teaching and learning or to assist them in undertaking their duties, they should ensure the items are not hazardous and dangerous. Staff should ensure they have approval from their line manager, where items would not be considered everyday resources.

Respect for the personal property of others is paramount, and any interference with or damage to another person's belongings may result in disciplinary action.

Behaviour Towards Others

Whilst employed by the Trust, employees should treat their colleagues and any other person with whom they come into contact, with respect and dignity. The Trust is committed to a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Gifts, Hospitality and Prizes

The Trust has set this policy for the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, awards, prizes or any other benefit by the Trust or its staff which might be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity. Where benefits have been received exceeding £25 in value, they must be recorded in a register detailing, for each occasion, the nature of the benefit and the donor, in case of later complaint.

When giving gifts, the CEO will ensure that the decision is fully documented and has regard to the propriety and regularity of the use of public funds. Gifts to children should be proportional and fair across all and agreed as a year group.

The Trust is committed to ensuring full governance regarding gifts, hospitality and prizes. Further details can be found in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Staff Policies

Please refer to 'School Organisation' Teams for the following procedures and policies:

- Appraisal Policy
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Management of Sickness Absence Policy
- Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Parental Leave Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Pay Policy
- Probation Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dress Code
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Social Media Policy

Email Internet & Social Media

The Trust's technology systems, including access to email and the Internet, are provided and supported for business purposes. All usage must be both reasonable and appropriate. Use of Trust technology systems for non-business matters is not permitted during working hours. Use of personal devices like smartphones and tablets is not permitted during working hours. Users may use the Internet and email systems for their personal use outside of their working hours, so long as this does not interfere in any way with their work or the Trust's operational requirements.

The use of these systems for both business and personal use is at the CEO's discretion and may be withdrawn at any time. The CEO reserves the right to block access to any internet site (for further details please see the Trust's policy on 'Acceptable Use of Technology').

The use of the Trust's technology systems will be monitored and misuse will be addressed as a disciplinary matter.

Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about our Trust, our students or their parents or carers; our governors or staff; suppliers and vendors; and other affiliates and stakeholders.

Staff should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our Trust's reputation, even indirectly.

If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our Trust or our stakeholders, you should print out the content and contact Executive Headteacher. All staff are responsible for protecting our Trust's reputation.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media eg Facebook with pupils or parents.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the Trust's premises. Further details can be found in the Smoking Policy.

Working Time

It is necessary that all staff are in school at their agreed starting time and do not leave before their agreed finishing time, unless by prior arrangement. Our expectations are that:

- You attend work in accordance with your contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays
- Wherever possible, you make routine medical and dental appointments outside of your working hours or during holidays. The only exceptions to this requirement will be in the event of an emergency or particular difficulty, in relation to hospital appointments (which are rarely negotiable) or to attend ante-natal care if you are pregnant. Pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off for ante-natal appointments. In any circumstances, however, you should agree time off with the Head of Schools at the earliest opportunity to ensure that adequate cover arrangements can be made
- Prior to making any request, you refer to the Trust's policy on special leave if you need time off for any reason other than personal illness. Any member of staff taking such leave without permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

School Continuity

In the event of major disruption, such as inclement weather, we need to minimise the impact on our pupils and community. In these instances, please refer to the School Continuity Plan. Please ensure the contact details held by the school for you are up to date.

Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the Trust or affect the Trust's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure

We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the Trust.

Staff must not behave in a way outside work that may impact on their suitability to work with children. This includes behaviour which does not directly involve a child/children. Should we become aware of

any such incident or behaviour, we may treat the issue as a safeguarding matter and manage it in accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance document. Employees should be aware that any behaviour that we consider may impact on an employee's suitability to work with children will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure and may lead to a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Teaching Regulation Agency (where appropriate).

We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the Trust.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods / services to the school or be rewarded through association with the school.

Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work related functions and work related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

Physical contact with students

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.

There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age-appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position, then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to the Head of School.

Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

Behaviour management

Employees should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is completely unacceptable.

Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, employees should follow the Trust's behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

Social contact with students

Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to the Head of School.

The Trust's advice to staff is not to connect to students via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and that the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.

Our Trust is part of our community, and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of the Trust. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Head of School of any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about

Working one to one with students

There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the Trust
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand
- Reports to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

Agency workers

We will investigate allegations made against agency workers with the cooperation of the agency. Whilst we may decide to cease using the services of an agency worker, this will not prevent us from investigating allegations and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. We expect agency workers and agencies to cooperate with our investigations and with external agencies where applicable.

We will discuss with the agency whether it may be appropriate for them to consider suspending an agency worker, or whether we are prepared to redeploy an agency worker during an investigation.