

# Staff Code of Conduct

## A place where everyone belongs

**Our vision:** Templars - a place where everyone belongs; where everyone is proud to belong; and where everyone is welcomed, feels safe and strives to achieve their full potential.

**Our mission:** Every child. Every day. Every chance.

**Our values:** Care, Respect and Honesty.

### DOCUMENT CONTROL

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*Safeguarding and equality are considered throughout the implementation of this document.*



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct, as adopted, applies to all those employed in this school.
- 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 (in addition for Teachers, the Teachers' Standards). The school believe that employees are responsible for their actions. The Headteacher/line manager will ensure that employees are briefed on the content and have access to a copy of the Code of Conduct. However, it is 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 Headteacher or line manager.
- 1.4 If an employee's actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code, then the school 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 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's procedures.

## **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. 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 in relation to actions and behaviours, including the Data Protection Policy and any other related policies.

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- 2.3 Employees working with young people 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 individuals who access school services will be regarded as potential gross misconduct.
- 2.4 Employees have a responsibility for ensuring a safe learning environment for pupils within the school/establishment.
- 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 Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 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 and legal obligations (including, but not limited to, employment law, safeguarding, health and safety, data protection, etc.) which support the well-being and development of pupils. Employees will receive relevant training where necessary.
- 2.9 Employees must not enter into a personal relationship with pupils or conduct improper relationships with pupils through, for example mobile phone, e-mail and any social media platforms. Further guidance can be found in the school's social media guidance.
- 2.10 Employees should not bring the reputation and standing of the school into disrepute.

### **3. Working Relationships**

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- 3.1 All employees have a right to be treated with dignity at work. Employees should always respect their colleagues, the pupils and the reputation of the school.
  - 3.2 All employees are expected to follow the school's policies on equality and diversity. All forms of discrimination, bullying, harassment, including sexual harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation., 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.
  - 3.4 If there are work related issues, which cannot be resolved informally with another colleague, the Headteacher or line manager should be advised.
  - 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 the Headteacher.
  - 3.6 Employees should maintain an effective and professional working relationship with their colleagues.
  - 3.7 School policies, procedures and codes of practice should always be followed.
  - 3.8 An employee should never conceal a matter that should be reported, or damage, alter or falsify any document, form or record.
  - 3.9 It is the responsibility of the employee that if their personal circumstances change (e.g., change of address or telephone number) they should inform a member of the administration team, the Headteacher or their line manager in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### **4. Dress and Personal Appearance**

- 4.1 All employees act as ambassadors for the school and role models for the pupils, therefore an acceptable standard of dress and appearance is required for the workplace. Where there are any concerns in relation to dress and appearance the Headteacher or line manager will discuss these informally with the employee and ensure that standards and expectations are set, as per sections 4.2 to 4.6 below.
- 4.2 Whilst at work, employees must be clean and tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene, or where a uniform is provided for specific roles, it must be worn. Photographic identity passes must be worn whilst on school premises and/or whilst undertaking school business off site where this is appropriate, e.g., meeting with external agencies, parents, the local community etc.
- 4.3 All employees are expected to dress professionally at all times. Clothing should provide sufficient bodily cover, should not be offensive and should not present a risk to health and safety.
- 4.4 If jewellery (including body piercings) is worn it should be discreet and appropriate to a professional appearance. It must not be excessive and must not present a potential health and safety risk to yourself, pupils or colleagues. Subject to 4.5, where jewellery (including body piercings) poses a risk to health and safety, and/or where its appearance may be inappropriate, it must be removed or concealed where appropriate.
- 4.5 Within these general guidelines, the school recognises and values the diversity of its employees and therefore clothes, jewellery or other religious artifacts worn for cultural, religious, or reasons related to belief, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions, will normally be acceptable provided that there are no health and safety reasons as to why the wearing/not wearing of certain items may not be permissible.
- 4.6 Employees who have tattoos must ensure that tattoos with inappropriate or offensive wording and pictures are covered with clothing at all times.



Employees are expected to cover any such tattoos if asked to do so by the Headteacher.

## **5. Working with Pupils**

### **5.1 Position of Power or Influence**

- 5.1.1 The relationship between employees working with pupils is one in which the employee has a position of power or influence. It is vital for all employees to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. The potential for exploitation and harm of pupils means that employees have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Employees should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. An employee should report and record any potential concerns regarding abuse of power or influence.

This includes the way in which employees speak to pupils. A positive, respectful and encouraging tone should be used at all times. Where it is necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour or to get pupil's attention, it may be reasonable for employees to raise their voices and/or use an authoritative tone. However, it is not appropriate for employees to raise their voices at pupils habitually or speak to them disrespectfully.

- 5.1.2 Employees should refer to pupils by their preferred name. Disrespectful nicknames, words and terms should be avoided. Employees should exercise caution in referring to pupils by nicknames and more general terms of endearment or familiarity.

### **5.2 Infatuations**

Occasionally, a pupil 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 pupil is potentially developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the



Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

### **5.3 Social Contacts**

- 5.3.1 Employees should not seek to have social contact with a pupil or their families unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with the Headteacher. If a parent or pupil 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 the Headteacher. Such examples could be related to internet social networking sites (i.e. being asked to be a 'friend' on 'Facebook'). Employees should follow the school's Social Media guidance.
- 5.3.2 Employees should gain permission from the Headteacher if there is a need for them to give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home or email address to a pupil. 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 interests of seeking to protect the employee.

### **5.4 Physical Contact**

- 5.4.1 There are occasions when it is appropriate for employees to have some physical contact with the pupil with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, employees should only make physical contact with a pupil in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities. When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time and of limited duration. Examples may include, but are not limited to the use of approved team teach techniques, intervening in physical altercations, during PE or music lessons, consoling a child etc.
- 5.4.2 In all circumstances where a pupil initiates inappropriate physical contact, employees should sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries and must always report such circumstances to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **5.5 Sexual Activity**

- 5.5.1 It is an offence for a person over eighteen to engage in sexual activity with a child under eighteen 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 they do not teach the child. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact; it may also include non-contact activities.
- 5.5.2 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 investigation.

## **5.6 Low-Level Concerns**

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that: 1) is inconsistent with the code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and 2) does not meet the threshold of harm (set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 paragraph 355) or is not considered serious enough for the school to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Such low-level concerns should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Low-Level Concern Policy.

## **6. Working and Contact with the Media**

- 6.1 Employees should refer any enquiries from the media in relation to the school, the local authority, or third party contractors, to the Headteacher in the first instance.
- 6.2 Employees who write or give interviews to the media or appear on television/radio/social media must ensure that they make it clear that they are



not representing the school's view and do not bring the school or local authority into disrepute.

- 6.3 Employees should not publicise material which is confidential or which is not publicly available, or is found to bring the school or the local authority into disrepute.

## **7. Working with Elected Members and Political Neutrality**

- 7.1 Employees should never directly or indirectly seek the support of any elected members when they are making an application for further employment within the school or local authority.
- 7.2 Employees must not use elected members to bypass formal local authority and school procedures in any way.
- 7.3 If an employee develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise, they should notify the Headteacher.
- 7.4 Employees must not manifest their personal or political opinions in a manner which interferes with their work.

## **8. Conduct outside of work**

- 8.1 Any work-related social event is likely to be considered an extension of the workplace and, as such, employees are expected to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour.
- 8.2 Employees must not engage in conduct or behaviour outside of work which indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children, or in a way which damages the employee's reputation, the reputation of the school or the reputation of other members of the school community.

## **9. Working and the Law**

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- 9.1 Employees have a duty at all times to uphold the law. This includes during times when they are not at work.
- 9.2 Teaching and other roles held within the education sector are notifiable occupations, which means that the police report any conviction or caution given to employees working in schools to the Department for Education (DFE). Offences involving a risk of harm to children or to vulnerable adults are considered by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All other convictions and cautions are passed to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) which has a role in determining if a caution or criminal offence is relevant to a teacher's registration.
- 9.3 Any employee subject to criminal charges, cautions or other criminal investigation (including where arrested or released on bail), or who are convicted of an offence, must notify the Headteacher as soon as is reasonably practicable, whether they feel the matter is relevant to their employment or not. The Headteacher will then consider if any follow up action is necessary, offer any reasonable support to the employee, and decide if the matter should be considered under the school's disciplinary procedure. Some offences would be classed as serious and would fall under the definition of gross misconduct.
- 9.4 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 any scripts for any educational assessments, and should not provide unauthorised photocopies of forthcoming examination papers to pupils, or coerce anyone else to do so.

## **10. Working Safely**

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 Employees working in one-to-one situations with pupils 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 pupil.

- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 An employee must report any incident, accident or “near misses” they have at work as soon as possible and accurately complete the appropriate accident reporting system, for which training will be provided. This includes verbal and physical assaults.
- 10.5 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).
- 10.6 Employees should not consume alcohol or illegal drugs during the working day, including any rest breaks or breaks between shifts. Exceptions in relation to the consumption of alcohol may be granted in certain limited situations with the express permission of the Headteacher.
- 10.7 All employees are expected to carry out their work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely affected by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs. Employees are advised to refer to the Addiction and Substance Abuse Policy.
- 10.8 Employees must notify the Headteacher or their line manager should they be prescribed legal medication or plan to take legal medication that may cause side effects that may impair their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively.
- 10.9 The school operates a No Smoking Policy. This applies to all school premises. It also applies when transporting individuals in school or private vehicles and when visiting individuals in their own homes or other establishments.



## **11. Gifts**

- 11.1 An employee's actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and must not give the impression to another employee, parent, pupil or service user that they are influenced in this way.
- 11.2 Subject to the below, employees should only accept individual gifts of a modest and token value (i.e. less than £25).
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 If employees accept any bribes from an individual that provides the school with goods or services, they may be guilty of corruption. Employees should inform the Headteacher if anyone tries to bribe them or if there is evidence of improper behaviour by others.
- 11.5 The giving of gifts or rewards to pupils 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 the Headteacher.
- 11.6 Employees should be cautious when selecting pupils 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.

## **12. Working with Integrity**

- 12.1 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 Headteacher.

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- 12.2 Employees are required to declare to the Headteacher any pecuniary interests which could conflict with the school's interests, including any Directorships or equivalent position, which they may hold as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 12.3 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 must be completed honestly and accurately.
- 12.4 Activities/private interests/outside employment, which employees may participate in when they are not at work, must not bring the school into disrepute. Employees should not put themselves in a position which could result in public confidence in the school being weakened.

### **13. Use of Electronic Technologies and Personal Communication Devices**

- 13.1 Under no circumstances should employees use school equipment to access inappropriate images on the internet or access any other site which could call into question their suitability to work with children. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing inappropriate content. The same rule applies to the use of the school's equipment by employees at home e.g. laptops and tablets. Equipment containing such images or links must not be brought into the workplace.
- 13.2 Employees must exercise caution when using communication technologies and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 13.3 Employees must only use their school email account or school systems when communicating electronically with pupils and parents.
- 13.4 Employees must not use personal electronic communication devices such as mobile phones or tablets as cameras in school. Any photographs/video footage



must be taken using school equipment. Employees must only save images on school IT hardware/computers.

13.5 Employees should not use personal mobile phones or tablets in school whilst in front of pupils during their directed/paid hours of employment unless there are exceptional circumstances, and they have requested and been given explicit permission to do so by the Headteacher or their line manager. Outside of directed/paid hours mobile phones or tablets should only be used in areas of the school where/when pupils are not present.

13.6 Employees are advised to also refer to the school's Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Social Media Guidance.

#### **14. Working with Money and Property**

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

14.2 Financial and Accounting procedures within the school should be followed at all times.

14.3 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, printers/photocopiers and other ICT facilities can only be used in accordance with school policy e.g. use of facilities by recognised trade unions and/or with the permission of the Headteacher/line manager.

14.4 Employees should follow the school'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.

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- 14.5 Employees should ensure that they follow the school's 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 school's systems or property.
- 14.6 All documents, manuals, hardware and software provided for your use by the school, and any data or documents (including copies) produced, maintained or stored on the school's computer systems or other electronic equipment remain the property of the school. Any school property in your possession and any original or copy documents obtained by you in the course of your work for the school shall be returned at any time on request and in any event at the end of your employment.
- 14.7. If at any time during your employment you make or create anything to which intellectual property rights apply then all copyrights, patents, trademarks, and all other intellectual property rights will remain the property of the school and/or Council as applicable.
- 14.8 You shall not (except in the course of your duties), either during employment or at any time after its termination, use or disclose to any person, company or other organisation whatsoever any confidential or business information.
- 14.9 Employees must return any school property or equipment which the school has given them as soon as they leave their job or when requested.

## **15. Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters**

- 15.1 If employees are involved in recruitment and selection, they are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly in accordance with the school'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 them.

15.2 Any reference provided by the Headteacher in relation to another employee on behalf of the school, whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and give an honest representation of that employee. Any personal reference given by a line manager or any other employee should make clear that it is not given on behalf of the school.

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

## **16. Outside Commitments and Private Work**

16.1 Employees may undertake work outside of school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect their work performance in school. It is a requirement that employees seek approval in advance of taking on any external paid or voluntary work from the Headteacher. The Headteacher should assess if the nature of the work might be seen to conflict with the interests of the school and advise accordingly.

16.2 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.

## **17. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality**

17.1 Employees may have access to confidential information about pupils and other employees 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 pupil to do so or in accordance with the law. They should gain the permission of the Headteacher before disclosing this information to any unauthorised party, in order to protect the employee from any accusations of inappropriate use.

17.2 Information held by the school in relation to employees and pupils will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Legislation, including UK GDPR and



the Data Protection Act 2018. 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.

- 17.3 Employees should respect the confidentiality of school meetings and the contents of any confidential school documents. This includes where such information is accessed outside of school and/or taken off school site. Employees are advised to also refer to the school's Acceptable use of IT Policy and Social Media Guidance.

**18. Being a Member of an Organisation**

Employees should ensure that their involvement with any external organisation does not lead to a conflict of interest with their position as an employee of the school, or conflict with the school's policies/objectives, or damage the school's reputation. Any advice, guidance, or decisions for which they are responsible must not be influenced by their membership of a particular organisation. This does not apply to membership of a Trade Union.

**19. Review**

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every 3 years in consultation and negotiation with recognised Trade Unions and revised as necessary. It may be reviewed sooner as statutory or legal obligations require.