



Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

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| Audience: | All staff and volunteers |
| Reviewed /Approved | Reviewed April 2025 (DoE) Reviewed Board July 2025 |
| Other related policies / procedures: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Harassment Policy • Disciplinary Procedure policy • Safeguarding and Child Protection policy • Whistleblowing • Anti- Bullying and Harassment • Data Protection (GDPR) • Staff Acceptable Use Policy • Online Safety Policy • Mobile Phone Policy • Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 • Healthy and Safety Policy • Crofty Financial Procedures Handbook • Gifts and Hospitality Policy • Safe Touch Policy • Intimate Care Policy • Drug and Alcohol Policy • Support for Pupils with Medical and Mental Health Needs Policy |
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1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy is designed to ensure that all staff employed or working as volunteers within Crofty Education Trust are treated fairly and consistently. It aims to promote a safe, efficient, and respectful working environment, fostering positive relations between all employees, volunteers, and students.

1.2 Within this document the term 'staff' is used to refer to all adults working within the Trust, whether on a paid or voluntary basis. This policy sets out the standards of behaviour and performance expected of staff, in line with the Teacher's Standards (Appendix 1) and other relevant policies. You are under a duty to comply with these standards of behaviour and to behave in a professional and reasonable manner.

1.3 Staff are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this code of conduct and the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure. Failure to comply with the expected standards of performance and behaviour outlined in this policy may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant Trust policies.

2. Objectives of a safe School culture

2.1.1 To safeguard our pupils and protect all employees.

2.1.2 To create and maintain an ethos of mutual respect, openness, trust, and fairness within the Trust.

2.1.3 To set clear expectations of performance and conduct.

2.1.4 To encourage staff to report concerns with confidence, ensuring confidentiality.

2.1.5 To implement appropriate sanctions when necessary.

3. General standards of behaviour

3.1 Personal Standards

Staff are expected to maintain high personal standards of behaviour when dealing with other staff, volunteers, governors, parents, and students. Public trust in the school could be undermined if staff engage in:

3.1.1 Consumption of drugs or alcohol during work hours or events that could impair work performance. (See the Drug and Alcohol Policy.)

3.1.2 Threatening, fighting, or assaulting anyone, whether on or off the school premises, including behaviour that could damage the Trust's reputation, or which could potentially bring the school into disrepute.

3.1.3 Theft, taking items without authority, or deliberately damaging school property.

3.1.4 Abuse of their position within the school to benefit themselves or others, including showing undue favouritism.

4. General Obligations

4.1 Staff must act professionally at all times, setting a good example for pupils and representing the Trust positively. This includes:

4.1.1 Not using offensive language or discussing inappropriate topics (e.g., personal or sexual relationships) in the presence of pupils.

- 4.1.2 Not working under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication that impairs judgement.
- 4.1.3 Always acting in good faith and in the best interest of the Trust, its students, and its staff.
- 4.2 While employed by Crofty Education Trust, all staff members are expected to uphold professional conduct at all times, demonstrating responsibility and respect for the values of the Trust. In particular, staff should:
 - 4.2.1 Adhere to the terms and conditions of their contract, including working hours and confidentially.
 - 4.2.2 Observe all Trust policies, procedures, rules, and regulations which are included in your induction or notified to you from time to time by means of notice boards, email, the intranet or otherwise.
 - 4.2.3 Follow the School Behaviour Policy
 - 4.2.4 Ensure health, safety, and wellbeing of colleagues, students, and third parties by complying with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy.
 - 4.2.4 Comply with all reasonable instructions given by managers, with a cooperative and proactive approach; and
 - 4.2.5 Always act in good faith, prioritising the best interests of the Trust, students, and staff.
- 4.3 Failure to maintain these standards may lead to disciplinary under The Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 4.4 Staff must not use their professional position to promote personal, political, religious, or ideological beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or could be perceived as coercive. All discussions should remain respectful and age appropriate, in line with the approved curriculum and the values of the Trust.

5. Safeguarding and Reporting Low-Level Concerns

- 5.1 All staff have a duty of care to protect pupils from harm, which includes physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. Staff should be familiar with and follow the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures, including the process of making referrals to children's social care. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct. A copy of this policy and all associated policies are available from the staff room notice board or on CPOMS.
- 5.2 Staff must report any concerns about a pupil or a colleague's conduct to the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL), or in their absence to the deputy DSL.
- 5.3 Staff should be aware of, understand and follow the requirements within Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 including disclosure any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the school's ability to safeguard pupils.
- 5.4 All staff are expected to report any concern about a colleague's conduct, even if it does not meet the threshold for formal safeguarding procedures. Low-level concerns could include (this list is not exhaustive):
 - 5.4.1 Being over-friendly with pupils.
 - 5.4.2 Using inappropriate language.
 - 5.4.3 Failing to maintain professional boundaries.
- 5.4 Reporting low-level concerns helps foster a transparent, safe environment and allows early intervention where needed. Staff should report these concerns to the Headteacher, DSL or in their absence to the deputy DSL, in line with the Trust's safeguarding procedures.

6. Relationships

6.1 Staff- Students

Staff members hold a position of trust and must establish and maintain professional boundaries with pupils. There may be occasions where one-to-one working with a pupil is necessary. These interactions should be avoided where possible unless they are part of an agreed timetable or specific support plan, approved by a manager or headteacher and conducted in a safe and observable environment, such as take place in a setting where the interaction is observable (e.g., with the door open or in a room with windows).

6.2 Staff should inform colleagues of any one-to-one arrangements in advance and always prioritise pupil and personal safety.

6.3 Staff must not communicate or engage with students on social media. All communication with students should be via the Trust's approved systems.

6.4 Staff should be aware that pupils may develop infatuations or 'crushes'. These must be handled sensitively and reported promptly to the Headteacher, DSL or in their absence to the deputy DSL. This ensures appropriate action can be taken and professional boundaries maintained.

6.5 If the Trust has been made aware of any allegations of inappropriate conduct against a staff member, the Trust will act in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure and the framework set out in **keeping children safe in education 2024** guidance.

6.6 Staff-Parents/carers

Staff should maintain a professional relationship with parents/carers. Communication with parents/carers should be clear, constructive, and professional, using the Trust's systems only.

6.7 There is a general expectation that staff will:

6.7.1 Be polite to members of the public at all times.

6.7.2 Give/provide their name when speaking or writing to parents/carers and other members of the public or school community when speaking or writing on behalf of the Trust.

6.7.3 Ensure that any information provided in relation to the school is accurate.

6.7.4 Ensure that any information provided to third parties is in line with the Data Protection Act (2018)

6.7.5 Respect confidential information provided to them in the course of their work.

6.7.6 Avoid doing anything which could make the public doubt the motives or integrity of a member of staff of the school or bring the school into disrepute.

6.7.7 Ensure that any significant concerns or complaints expressed to them by parents' carers, or the general public are passed on to the senior management of the school.

6.8 It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse. It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

6.9 This means that staff should:

- 6.9.1 always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme
- 6.9.2 advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to concern
- 6.9.3 refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents unless agreed with senior managers
- 6.9.4 inform senior management of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship
- 6.9.5 inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g., babysitting, tutoring

7. Home Visits

7.1 All work with pupils and parents should usually be undertaken in the school. There are however occasions, in response to an urgent, planned, or specific situation or job role, where it is necessary to make a one-off or regular home visits, e.g., to undertake a welfare visit during school closures.

7.2 Staff should follow the home visit and Lone working Policies when conducting home visits, including completion of a risk assessment before commencing work.

8. Educational Visits and Overnight Supervision

8.1 Staff involved in educational visits must follow the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and complete required risk assessments. Maintain professional boundaries and appropriate supervision at all times and avoid situations where they are alone with a pupil in a sleeping area or private space.

8.2 Where overnight stays are planned, staff must ensure sleeping arrangements provide appropriate safeguarding, privacy, and supervision, and that parents are informed in advance.

8.3 Staff responsible for organising education visits should also be familiar with the Department for Education's advice on Health and Safety available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>.

9. Transporting Pupils

9.1 Staff should not provide transport to pupils unless the need for this has been agreed by a manager. In these circumstances a risk assessment should be completed which includes evidence that the vehicle is safe, the driver is suitable and that there is valid insurance in place, including business cover. Supervision of the children being transported should also be considered.

9.2 Staff should never offer to transport pupils outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean the child may be at risk. In these circumstances the matter should be recorded and reported to both their manager and the child's parent(s).

10. Receiving gifts

10.1 While the Trust understands that often staff members receive gifts from pupils and their parents, staff are reminded to take care not to accept any gifts that might be construed as a bribe or lead the giver to expect any preferential treatment.

10.2 Small gifts as a token of appreciation are usually acceptable, however, it is unacceptable to receive gifts of a significant value or to give gifts to pupils and their parents in return.

10.3 Gifts with a higher value than £25 must be declared to the Trust Financial Controller.

10.4 Further details on gifts and hospitality are available from the Trust Financial Controller and can be found in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

11. Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Harassment

11.1 The Trust is committed to providing a work environment free from sexual harassment, harassment, and bullying. This applies to both work and non-work situations. Sexual Harassment, Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be addressed under the Trust's Sexual Harassment Policy, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, and Disciplinary Procedures.

11.2 Bullying and/ or harassment, is any unsolicited physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which is unwanted and that has the purpose of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, degrading and hostile environment for them.

11.3 Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

12. Conduct outside of work

12.1 Staff shall not engage in conduct which may bring the Trust, themselves, or other members of the Trust community into disrepute. Any such conduct could lead to summary dismissal, in particular criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will not be tolerated.

12.2 Staff should be mindful of their use of technology and social networking websites. Staff must not post any derogatory, inappropriate, or misleading comments about the school/Trust, its employees, or pupils online or on social media. Staff must ensure that their personal social media profiles are not available to pupils.

12.3 If you see any misuse of social media, or social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on us, you should report it to the headteacher. Failure to comply with the standards outlined in this policy, may be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

13. Dress code

13.1 Staff are required to dress in a manner that is suitable and appropriate to their role, and this may be different to how they dress when not at work. This means that staff should not wear clothing with slogans or images which may be considered as offensive or inappropriate or display any political slogans. Clothing should be appropriate for the workplace and present a professional impression of the school/Trust.

13.2 Footwear must be safe, smart and have regard to health and safety considerations. Where the Trust provides safety clothing and equipment, it should be worn or used as appropriate and as directed.

13.3 Jewellery should be kept to a minimum. Tattoos which may be viewed as offensive must be covered by normal clothing or other appropriate material while at work.

13.4 Hair and beards should not compromise health and safety, with hair and beard nets being worn at all times when handling food.

13.5 Religious and cultural clothing are permitted, subject to health and safety considerations.

14. Confidentiality

14.1 During their employment, staff will have access to sensitive and confidential information relating to the Trust, other members of staff, pupils, and their parents. Staff shall not disclose such information to any person unless otherwise authorised, to report safeguarding concerns or as required by law.

15. IT and communication devices

15.1 All staff and volunteers must comply with the Trust's Acceptable Use Policy regarding the use of email, internet, AI, and communication devices. This will be provided to staff as part of their induction procedure, updates will be provided as necessary.

15.2 Misuse or excessive personal use of our telephone or email system or inappropriate internet use will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. Misuse of the internet can in some cases be a criminal offence. It will usually amount to gross misconduct to misuse our systems by creating, viewing, accessing, transmitting, or downloading any of the following material (this list is not exhaustive):

15.2.1 Sending, forwarding, or reading private emails at work.

15.2.2 Sending or forwarding chain emails, junk emails, cartoons, jokes, or gossip.

15.2.3 Using AI in breach of GDPR and Trust policies.

15.2.4 Contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages, copying, or forwarding emails to those who do not have a real need to receive them, or using "reply all" unnecessarily on an email with a large distribution list.

15.2.5 Sell or advertise using the Trust's communication systems.

15.2.6 Agree to terms, enter into contractual commitments, or make representations by email unless appropriate authority has been obtained.

15.2.7 Pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films, and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature).

15.2.8 Offensive, obscene, or criminal material or material which is liable to cause embarrassment to us or to our pupils.

15.2.9 A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation.

15.2.10 Material, which is discriminatory, offensive, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to others (including material which breaches our Equal Opportunities Policy or our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy).

15.2.11 Confidential information about us, or any of our staff or pupils (except as authorised in the proper performance of your duties).

15.2.12 Unauthorised software.

15.2.13 Any other statement which is likely to create any criminal or civil liability (for you or us); or

15.2.14 Music or video files or other material in breach of copyright.

15.3 Any such action will be treated very seriously and is likely to result in summary dismissal.

15.4 Personal use of social media or mobile phones are prohibited during working hours (unless agreed by the headteacher in extreme personal circumstances). Outside of these hours, staff should only use their mobile phones in areas where pupils are not present.

15.5 Staff must not use their mobile camera or any camera to take pictures of pupils or post images of pupils online without their consent and that of their parents. Images of pupils must be saved on the Trust computer systems only. Staff should follow the Trust Policy for the taking, storage and sharing of images.

15.6 Staff should not:

15.6.1 take images of pupils for their personal use

15.6.2 display or distribute images of pupils unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so (and, where appropriate, consent from the child)

15.6.3 take images of children using personal equipment

15.6.4 take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress

15.6.5 take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g., following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children's social care

15.6.6 record or share any sensitive conversations or disclosures from children.

15.6.7 take images of children which could be considered as indecent or sexual.

15.7 If you disclose your affiliation with us on your profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not represent those of your Trust (unless you are authorised to speak on our behalf). You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you are required to represent.

15.8 You should make it clear in social media postings, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal email address.

15.9 The Trust reserves the right to retrieve the contents of email messages or to check internet usage (including pages visited and searches made) as reasonably necessary in the interests of the Trust, including for the following purposes (this list is not exhaustive):

15.9.1 To monitor whether use of the email system or the internet is legitimate and in accordance with this policy.

15.9.2 To find lost messages or to retrieve messages lost due to computer failure.

15.9.3 To assist in the investigation of alleged wrongdoing; or

15.9.4 To comply with any legal obligation.

15.10 Where evidence of misuse is found, we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the Disciplinary Procedure. If necessary, such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

16. Physical Contact and Physical Intervention

16.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan, in line with the Trust Safe Touch and Intimate Care Policies.

16.2 Where personal or intimate care is required, staff must follow the Trust's Intimate Care Policy, ensure tasks are recorded, and respect the pupil's privacy and dignity. Only trained and DBS-cleared staff should carry out these tasks, and where possible, pupils should be supported to carry out their own care independently.

16.3 Staff may only use physical intervention as a last resort to prevent injury or serious harm. Any intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. Be reported to the Headteacher and parents/carers as soon as possible and recorded in line with the Trust's Safe Touch Policy.

16.4 Where pupils have known behaviour risks, staff must follow any individual support plan or risk assessment in place.

17. First Aid and Medication

17.1 Only trained and authorised staff may administer first aid or medication, following the Trust's Support for Pupils with Medical and Mental Health Needs Policy. All interventions must be recorded, and consent from parents/carers must be obtained where appropriate.

18. Making professional Judgements

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate, or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or act in the best interest of a pupil which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with a manager. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe, and applied equitably.

Appendix 1

NATIONAL TEACHER STANDARDS PART TWO: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

A teacher is 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 throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' 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 pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies, and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

Signed by:

Chair of Trustees:Date:

CEO:Date:

This policy will be reviewed annually