



The Bridge School Code of Conduct for Staff

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1. Aims, Scope and Principles

The Code of Conduct applies to all school staff, volunteers and visiting therapists / helpers and other persons of trust working in the school. This policy should be read in partnership with USP Trust's Policy, 'Staff and persons in a position of trust code of conduct', that follows as an appendix to this document.

This code of conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. School staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example, acting as role models to all pupils within the trust. [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings \(May 2019\)](#) must be read in conjunction with this code of conduct.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise their position within the work setting or bring the school or trust into disrepute. All staff who work in our school provide a role model for behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage pupils to do the same.

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that The Bridge School is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

Trust staff have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers and classroom staff will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards. Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the trust's pupils.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action.

2. Legislation and Guidance

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all The Bridge School staff are expected to observe. The Bridge School staff are role models and are in a position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the students within the school. As a member of our school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. Setting an Example

All staff who work in schools set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is, and is not, acceptable.

4. Equality and diversity

The Bridge School promotes inclusivity and values diversity. We seek to ensure that the work environment for our staff is supportive and one where individual respect is shown to all. All members of staff, and pupils, regardless of their age, (dis)ability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic background, culture, sexual orientation, religion or belief, sex, socio-economic status or any other factor will be treated equally, supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

5. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards (if applicable)

Any allegation of inappropriate behaviour made against a member of staff by a pupil, parent or other professional, unless manifestly malicious or vexatious, will be investigated and a record kept of it. Where the allegation is of a safeguarding nature it will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer in all cases in which it is

alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children

The Bridge School will refer to the Trust's lead on safeguarding Stephen Watts (swatts@unitysp.co.uk), who must be informed of any referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer. Please refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy for more details on handling allegations of abuse made against staff. Please also refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

6. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

In addition to this code of conduct, staff will familiarise themselves with the school's Safeguarding Policy and the school's child protection procedures and Behaviour Policy, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

The school's safeguarding policy and child protection procedures are available from the school office and on the school's website. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

7. Student Development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of students.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary, to support the development of students.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

8. Honesty and Integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using trust property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts (including modest gifts of a promotional character, e.g. calendars, diaries and other similar articles) worth less than £25 do not have to be declared.

For any gift worth between £25 and £50 a declaration should be made, within 28 days, by the member of staff, authorised by the Headteacher and retained for seven

years. Gifts worth more than £50 should be refused or donated to charity. Where parents club together to buy their child's teacher a gift that is worth more than £50, it is reasonable for the school to divide the value of the gift by the number of people who contributed.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the trust about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

9. Alcohol and Substance Misuse

- Alcohol misuse refers to a level of drinking which either persistently affects an employee's work or affects it on a 'one off' or occasional basis
- Substance misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and their misuse, whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs, and substances such as solvents.

Identifying the Problem:

The workplace provides an obvious opportunity to see the actual symptoms in the person who is at risk from excessive drinking and/or substance misuse. This includes not just the physical signs (bleary eyes, shaking hands, etc), but the other latent signs of drink or substance misuse related problems e.g. lateness, absenteeism, inefficiency, poor working relationships and reduced performance level.

The following have been identified as inherent problem when dealing with alcohol abuse:

- difficulty of early detection;
- stigma associated with alcohol abuse;
- powerful nature of the dependence;
- deep seated feelings of guilt, shame and hopelessness of the individual;
- lack of procedures for referral to treatment and help

The above factors often combine to encourage the individual to deny the existence of a problem and therefore to resist any support or treatment.

Dealing with Incidents of Alcohol and / or Substance Misuse

Take immediate HR advice. Each case will need to be judged on an individual basis depending on the circumstances including the balance between offering support and taking disciplinary action.

Discuss the matter with the employee as soon as possible and keep a clear record of the discussion.

Consider a referral to the occupational health service and encourage the employee to seek further support, e.g. from their GP, from the school's well-being programme and from their professional association.

Employees who suspect, or know, that they have an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem are encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily. Many well-being schemes include access to confidential counselling and the employee should be actively encouraged to explore such support.

Employees who decline to seek treatment, or to accept referral for diagnosis and/or treatment, or who discontinue a course of treatment before its satisfactory completion, and who are observed under monitoring to continue to produce an unsatisfactory work performance, may become subject to proceedings under the school's disciplinary procedure.

The procedure set out above does not apply to employees who, following the misuse of alcohol and/or other substances, behave in an unacceptable manner contrary to the standards of safety and conduct required by the Governing Body. Such cases will fall within the scope of the school's normal disciplinary procedure.

The confidential nature of any employee's records will be respected by those involved in the use of this policy.

10. Staff/Pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

Any sexual behaviour, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by a member of staff, volunteer or governor with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not.

Staff should not give out their home address or personal phone numbers (understanding that in some cases this will be known to some parents by way of residential proximity). Under no circumstances should a member of staff take a child to their own home, in or out of school hours. If there is a situation where the family is known to the member of staff outside of school and visits are likely or usual, this should be declared to the DSL and recorded.

Staff should not use their own vehicles to transport pupils without the express permission of both parents and the Headteacher. In order to be granted, the appropriate and approved insurance must be in place and the pupil's Risk Assessment completed to include these details.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room (or in the case of personal care, may enter the room, unfettered).
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff must never groom pupils in preparation for abuse. The responsibility not to groom continues once pupils leave the school and until they reach the age of 18. Staff must avoid contact with pupils and their parents outside of school hours if possible. Any personal relationships between staff and pupils or their parents must be declared to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at the school, who will keep a register.

Personal contact details must not be exchanged between staff and pupils or their parents. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable, unless sanctioned by the headteacher.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this must be reported to their line manager or the headteacher.

11. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles must not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.

Staff must not use private social media or any other means to attempt to contact pupils or their parents outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship.

They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at trust schools without their consent.

Staff should be aware of their school's online safety policy.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff are required to read and comply with the e-safety policy, particularly in respect of social media and e-mail use. Staff should be aware that any use of social media that brings the school into disrepute will be treated as misconduct.

12. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops/tablets, or school equipment for personal use, in front of pupils, except in case of emergency

13. Personal Phones and Tablets

Personal phones may be carried by staff and are encouraged for use on external trips as a means of communicating in the event of an emergency.

Personal phones must be kept out of sight and securely put away when students are present. Phones may only be used for personal reasons during staff break periods, out of sight of students in staff rooms or off-site.

To be clear, phones may NOT be used in front of students for any reason except emergencies or seeking travel directions at any time.

Calls may be made and received using the main school phone during school hours in necessary and emergency situations.

Personal telephones must never be used to take photographs of students. In emergency safeguarding situations, the DSL may instruct the use of personal phones or tablets for taking evidence, but this is only in the most exceptional circumstances. If such a situation occurs, the material must be downloaded and erased by the DSL at the earliest possible moment.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that students are not filmed or photographed by others when out in the community, no matter how innocent the occasion.

14. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the trust, trust schools, staff, pupils and their parents. This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than that which it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm. Staff have an obligation to share with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

15. Dress Code

A person's dress and appearance are important and contribute to the creation of the ethos, reputation and professional presentation of the school. In addition, school staff are role models for the young people in the school both in terms of behaviour and personal appearance.

Of course, staff should dress in ways that are comfortable and appropriate for their role and the work they undertake. Staff should not wear clothing that could be viewed as offensive, sexually provocative or cause embarrassment.

The school encourages a staff uniform comprising of branded polo shirt and branded fleece. One set of the uniform polo shirt and fleece is issued free of charge to all new starters. Additional items may be purchased at cost. In addition to the branded items mentioned the following dress code points should be observed. If long sleeved undershirts are worn under the polo shirt, they should be black or navy blue.

Scarves should not be worn for safety reasons.

Plain, dark (black or navy) trousers should be worn with the branded tops; blue jeans or shorts should not be worn. If staff are wearing shorts for PE then they are expected to change again at their earliest convenience.

If skirts are worn, they should be knee length or longer.

School staff electing not to accept and wear the branded uniform are required to dress in a smart way at all times. Staff should wear shirts with collars or ladies blouses. Round necked T-shirts and sleeveless T-shirts or tops should not be worn and shirts with logos or slogans should not be worn.

Footwear needs to be practical and protective, allowing the staff member to react appropriately to children's behaviour. Trainers or boots are suitable. Flip-flops or open-toe sandals should not be worn for safety reasons.

Outdoor coats, baseball caps, hats and sunglasses should not be worn when working in the building.

Tattoos should be covered up.

When in school, fleece neck warmers may be worn but scarves should be avoided for safety reasons.

Staff should avoid extreme hairstyles and should see advice from the Headteacher if they are unsure what is unacceptable.

16. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school or the trust or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the trust on social media.

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the governing board.

18. Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct.
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy