



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Red Hall
Staff Code of Conduct policy

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1.0 Introduction

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees of Dudley School. It is therefore important that you understand your roles and responsibilities whilst at work. It is also important, where necessary for you to understand how your behaviour and activities outside work may impact upon your ability to do your work during working hours.

This Code of Conduct is based on the School's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the provisions of the general law as well as your conditions of service.

As the Code applies to all employees, please take time to read it fully and ensure that your conduct is at all times consistent with its requirements. This document forms part of your contract of employment and you are required to comply with its contents. Democratic local government cannot be taken for granted – all of us involved in the service have to make a special effort to retain public confidence. Compliance with the Code will help maintain the reputation of local government in Dudley.

I am sure I can rely on you all to play your part in up-holding the highest standards in public life.

2.0 Standards

The principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, NDPBs, and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources.

The principles of public life are as follows:

- Selflessness – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- Integrity – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- Objectivity – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- Openness – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.
- Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Red Hall Primary School employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure.

In summary employees are required to:

- Attend work in a condition where they are able to carry out their duties safely and effectively
- Act honestly
- Act with dignity and treat all others with dignity and respect
- Be committed to delivering quality services to service users
- Understand and act in accordance with the School's vision and values as set out in the School's policy and procedures
- Work in accordance with the terms and conditions of their principal statement of employment and job description
- Understand and apply the School's rules, policies and procedures applicable to them and their role

2.1 Standards of Behaviour

2.1.1 Personal conduct and behaviour in the workplace

Employees are expected to treat all stakeholders and colleagues, with dignity and respect, this is expected in the manner in which they communicate whether verbal or written.

More specifically employees must:

- Ensure that their conduct is not discriminatory, bullying or harassing to others
- Ensure that their behaviour and performance meets workplace standards at any time that they are at work, representing the School or are likely to be identified or associated with their role as an employee of Red Hall Primary School (whether or not they are working at the time)
- Dress appropriately and present a professional role model for the pupils in school:
 - i.e. Staff should not wear Jeans or Denim, T-Shirts with slogans written on them
 - Footwear which may present them with a health and safety risk.
- Make sure that they are familiar with and follow the School's equality policies and aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

2.1.2 Use of Mobile Phones, Ipads, Smart Watches and other Photographic Equipment

The use of mobile phones in classrooms and corridors is prohibited. Employees should restrict the use of such devices to staff rooms or offices where pupils are not present.

Where staff are permitted to use ipads and other photographic equipment for school use, they must ensure that when taking photographs they have made themselves aware of the Data Protection and Privacy register. Only pupils whose parents have given permission for the taking of photographs for use by school should be taken.

Employees should not take photographs of children on their own personal equipment, without the permission of the Headteacher.

The use of photographic material should be used in accordance with the Data Protection and Privacy register. Any misuse of photographic images will be investigated in accordance with the school's Disciplinary Policy.

2.1.3 Misconduct

The Code of Conduct acts as a guide for employees on the standards expected of them when acting in good faith. This document forms part of their contract of employment and employees are required to comply with its contents. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may be considered to be gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure, including dismissal.

2.1.4 Alcohol and Drugs

Employees must not consume alcohol, use illicit drugs or illegal substances while at work or prior to attending work if likely to impact on their ability to do their job. When an employee is on call or standby they must ensure that any alcohol consumption is within the legal limit for driving in the event that they are recalled to work. Any alcohol consumed outside of work must not affect the employee's ability to do their work.

If an employee is taking legally prescribed or over-the-counter medication, they must ensure that the use of them does not affect their work performance and the safety of themselves and others. Where an employee is prescribed medication that affects their work performance their line manager should liaise

with HR to consult with Occupational Health.

2.1.5 Health, Safety and Well-being

All employees must comply with the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 and associated regulations, Guidance or Approved Codes of Practice. Employees are required to comply with the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

3.0 Protecting the School and its employees

3.1 Other Employment and conduct outside working time

Employees paid at grade 8 to 15 have conditions of service which require them to obtain written consent to take any outside secondary employment. This will be detailed in the employee's principal statement of employment. All employees should be clear about contractual obligations and must not take outside employment which conflicts with their position or with the School's interests. Any additional employment must be in accordance with any legislation that may apply such as the Working Time Regulations (1998) (as amended). They must also ensure that School time and/or resources are not utilised in connection with any approved private employment.

Generally, what an employee does outside work is of their own concern (unless professional standards state otherwise), but they must avoid doing anything that might adversely affect the reputation of the School or impact on the School's or their profession's confidence in their ability to do their job. This includes use of social media and the Internet. If in doubt, employees should seek the advice of the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

3.2 Criminal charges and convictions

Unless covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, all applicants are required to disclose any live criminal convictions or charges. Certain positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and require DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance before the applicant is offered a post. Where a post is subject to a DBS clearance, employees in the post will be required to participate in further DBS checks in line with regulatory requirements and/or the School's Policy. Please refer to the DBS Policy for further guidance.

If during the course of employment with the School an employee is charged, convicted of a crime or receives a caution or other form of reprimand in relation to a criminal offence, even if the offence does not relate to their employment, they must report the charge, conviction or caution or other form of reprimand within 5 working days to their line manager or the HR team. If they are on leave when they receive the charge, conviction or caution or other form of reprimand they must report it within 5 working days on their return from leave.

If an employee is found by the Council's benefit fraud team to have claimed benefits to which they were not entitled, and this results in action taken, either through prosecution, or by means of a local authority caution and/or administrative penalty issued by the benefits team as an alternative to prosecution, the employee is required to bring this to the attention of their line manager within 5 working days.

Failure to notify the School within the specified timescale may lead to disciplinary action under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Where an employee is charged, convicted of a crime, receives a caution or other form of reprimand the line manager will consult with the HR team and the Assistant Director for HR and Organisational Development, who will consider the impact upon the employee's position and if there has been a breach

of School Policies and Procedures, and whether disciplinary action under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure should be invoked, including dismissal.

Dependent upon the employee's position, consideration must be given to whether the employee poses a risk to children, or young people or to adults who access any health and social care services and a referral through safeguarding procedures may be necessary.

3.3 Use of School property, facilities and equipment

School facilities are to be used for School business and for no other purpose unless the employee has the Headteacher's approval beforehand.

Reasonable use of telephones and photocopiers is allowed in exceptional circumstances provided the employee has been authorised to do so by their manager. However, no paid or non-School work may be carried out in the School's time, or on the School's premises or with the use of the School's equipment.

Employees may use the internet for incidental and occasional personal use, as a recognition that familiarity with this technology is imperative to the Modernisation of Local Government. Consequently employees will be able to use the Internet during their own time for personal use i.e. during lunch breaks. Further guidance can be found in the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy and Use of Emails Policy on the following links:

Misuse of the internet including the use of, or attempted use of inappropriate websites, may lead to disciplinary action taking place under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

3.4 Use of Social Networking Sites

For most employees the use of social networking sites is prohibited in the workplace. However, such restrictions do not apply when employees are using their own equipment in their own time. Employees must not use School equipment to access social media for personal use, unless equipment is specifically provided for this purpose.

Comments and messages posted on the internet are available to millions of users worldwide to view and employees of Red Hall Primary School should be aware of this when posting information or making comments that might relate directly or indirectly about their work, customers of the School and work colleagues. Employees who do not directly identify themselves as a Red Hall Primary School employee when using social media for personal purposes at home, should be aware that the content they post on social media websites could still be construed as relevant to their employment at Red Hall Primary School. For example employees **must not** write or report on conversations, meetings or matters that are meant to be private or internal to Red Hall Primary School. The School has a duty of care towards its employees and would therefore treat any comments or messages posted on websites which cause offence seriously. This includes messages and comments posted in the employees own time that relate to fellow colleagues and the workplace, even when Red Hall Primary School may not have been specifically referred to but may be linked to the comments.

Care should be taken to ensure that there is nothing posted that could bring the School into disrepute or would be potentially dangerous. Posting of defamatory or potentially damaging comments about the School, its employees or clients would be considered gross misconduct. Posts of either nature on to the internet or social networking sites may lead to disciplinary action for misconduct/gross misconduct under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure.

Employees must not do anything including inappropriate contact/communication with children, young people or vulnerable adults that puts them in a potentially compromising situation in relation to their employment e.g. accepting friendships with any children, young people who access Dudley MBC services,

or to adults who access any health or social care services provided by Dudley MBC, on social networking sites. This is potentially a breach of confidence and trust as well as being unprofessional. Any inappropriate relationships within social networking sites that are brought to the School's attention will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action for misconduct/gross misconduct under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure. A referral through safeguarding procedures may also be necessary.

3.5 Use of Authority

Employees must not use their official position, status, powers or authority to seek to improperly influence a decision or action.

Employees are expected to provide honest, impartial and comprehensive advice regardless of their personal feelings on a matter. If an employee's personal views conflict with the performance of their official duties or if they believe they cannot act impartially, they should contact their line manager and attempt to resolve the conflict.

In their role of School employee or personal capacity, employees must not allow their personal interests to conflict with the School's requirements or use their position to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

When exercising a discretionary power, employees should ensure that the power is being used properly, impartially, equitably and is consistent with relevant legislation, delegations, procedures or guidelines. In exercising any power associated with their employment, employees must ensure that they are either statutorily authorised to do so or that they have been delegated the power by a person with the necessary authority to issue the delegation.

3.6 Use of Financial Resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They must strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the School. Employees with budgetary/purchasing control must ensure that they understand and comply with the School's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Employees must ensure that any expenditure is within the limits that they are personally authorised to incur. Failure to comply with the School's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations may lead to disciplinary action under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure.

3.7 Conflict of Interest

Where an employee faces a conflict between their private interests and public duties they must resolve the conflict in favour of their public duties. Where a conflict of interest is likely to occur due to their personal or immediate family private interests the employee must inform their manager, who will ensure that the School is not compromised. This is particularly pertinent where the employee is involved in making decisions affecting contracting, tendering or regulatory functions.

Examples of possible conflicts of interests are as follows:

- Employees with access to computer databases of customers updating their own personal records or those of close relatives
- Employees being contracted to provide services to the School outside their paid employment
- In a purchasing capacity liaising with a supplier who employs a close relative
- Generating work which involves travel to provide an opportunity to visit friends

- A supervisor who is in a position to approve higher duties or provide other benefits to a subordinate where a close personal relationship exists
- Involvement with an interview panel when a relationship exists with one of the applicants.

3.8 Personal Interests

Employees must declare to the Governing Body (using a pro forma provided for this purpose) any financial or non-financial interests, whether direct or indirect, which could conflict with the interests of the School. This would include any cases where the employee is a company director, company secretary or voluntary organisation trustee. The Governing Body will notify the Headteacher and any other appropriate employee of this declaration.

3.9 Appointment and Other Employment Matters

Employees involved in appointments must ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

Similarly, employees must not be involved in decisions relating to recruitment, discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner, etc.

3.10 Gifts and Hospitality

Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity as a School employee. If an allegation is made it is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

Employees must only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the School in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions must be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the School must be seen to be represented. They must be properly authorised and recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register maintained for this purpose.

When the hospitality has to be declined those making the offer need to be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the School. Although declined a record of the offer must be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Employees may only accept insignificant items of token value [i.e. less than £10]. Other items must be handed to the Headteacher for a prize in any raffle or tombola for charity if they are none perishable, or flowers must be used to display in public areas. In any instance these must all be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Employees must not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers and they should notify the Headteacher of any such offers.

Any refusals of hospitality, sponsorship, gifts or bequests must also be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register to ensure there is an accurate, detailed and auditable trail of all offers whether accepted or refused.

When receiving authorised hospitality employees need to be particularly sensitive as to its timings in

relation to decisions which the School may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.

Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the Headteacher gives consent in advance and where the School is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, etc. are required, employees must ensure that the School meets the cost of such visits and any meals to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions. All such matters should be recorded in the Gifts & Hospitality Register.

Employees who are bequeathed gifts or money in the will of a service user that they know from their working capacity must not accept the gifts or money unless they are insignificant items of token value (i.e. less than £10). When the gifts/money has to be declined the executor of the will needs to be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the School.

3.11 Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the School wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to an appropriate manager of any such interest. Similarly, where the School through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees must ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

3.12 Political Neutrality

Employees serve the School as a whole. It follows they must serve all Elected Members and not just those of the controlling group, and must ensure that the individual rights of all Elected Members are respected.

Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must follow every lawful expressed policy of the authority and must not allow their personal or political opinions to interfere with their work. They must be seen to be able, to remain unbiased in the performance of their duties. Failure to follow this may lead to disciplinary action under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Procedure.

3.13 Professional and Trade Union Activity

Members of professions are expected to uphold the standards of performance and conduct set by the relevant professional association and this Code of Conduct. Employees are expected to raise any concerns they may have regarding a conflict of interest between their role at the School and the standards of their profession.

When speaking in the capacity of workplace or trade union representative or profession association, it must be made clear that the opinion is made on behalf of the union or association represented and not the School.

3.14 Disclosure of Information

It is generally accepted that open government is best. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. The School itself may decide to be open about other types of information. Employees must be aware of which information their School is and is not open about, and act accordingly.

In the course of their employment employees may obtain information that has not been made public and is still confidential. Employees must never disclose confidential information given in confidence by anyone, or information which they acquire which they believe may be confidential in nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it unless they are required to do so by law.

Employees must not use any information obtained through their work for the School for personal gain or benefit, nor may they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any particular information received by an employee from a School or which is personal to that School and does not belong to the authority must not be divulged by the employee without the prior approval of that School, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.

Employees have legal obligations towards privacy and security whilst processing personal information relating to any living individual. Such information must be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Code of Practice and Freedom Of Information Act 2000. Breach of confidentiality may be considered a disciplinary offence under the Employee Improvement and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

In the event that, during the course of their employment with the School an employee has been employed within a traded services area and/or during their employment acquired access to confidential information relating to the trade then the following principles will apply:

- The employee shall not for 6 months after the end of their employment, solicit or endeavour to entice away from the School the custom of a client/customer with whom they have had contact with during the period of their employment, with a view to providing goods or services to that client/customer.
- The employee shall not for 6 months after the end of their employment offer to employ or engage or otherwise endeavour to entice away from the School and person employed or engaged by the School who was involved in any capacity within the traded services area and with whom they have dealt with.

3.15 Intellectual Property

Under copyright law the School owns any material made by the School or under its direction. As an employee, any material produced in the course of work belongs to the School unless otherwise explicitly provided for in the contract of employment. Therefore, to use any work owned by the School the employee must seek permission from the Headteacher.

3.16 Public communication

All media requests for information and enquiries that relate to policy and procedures and operational activities must be responded to by the Communications and Public Affairs Team.

When making a public comment in an official capacity employees must:

- Ensure that it is part of their official role
- Ensure that the facts are not misrepresented
- Ensure that the Data Protection Act is not contravened
- Respect the confidentiality of information that has not been approved for release either by Cabinet or through official School channels.

As private citizens employees have the same rights as members of the public to openly discuss or

comment on community and social issues. Employees must make it clear that when commenting in this capacity that it is their personal opinion and not that of the School and they are not abusing their position of knowledge gained from their role as a School officer.

3.17 Internal Audit

Where an internal audit is conducted on a function all employees are required to contribute to this work. Where an employee has been identified in an agreed action plan to carry out some work, it is their responsibility to ensure that it is undertaken within the agreed timescale.

4.0 Ways of Working

4.1 Working with Elected Members

Employees are responsible to the School through its senior managers. For some, their role is to give advice to Elected Members and senior managers and all are there to carry out the School's work. Mutual respect between employees and Elected Members is essential to good local government.

Employees dealing with Elected Members should be aware of the "Protocol for Relationships between Members and Officers of Dudley MBC" as set out in the Constitution.

4.2 Working with Local Community and Service Users

Employees must always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the School.

5.0 Whistleblowing

The School has a policy on confidential reporting, i.e., whistleblowing. Under this policy employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's work are encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns. A copy of the policy can be obtained from the Headteacher, school website or school's internal network. A copy is also held in each staffroom.

The policy explains the procedure for raising concerns internally or, if preferred, employees may seek free independent and confidential help from the charity, Public Concern at Work.

Reporting Process:

In the event of a member of staff or an adult working at Red Hall Primary School in a voluntary capacity (e.g. ITT student, Work Experience, Volunteer) who has a concern they wish to report they should report the matter as follows:

- A Child Protection/Safeguarding issue report to Mrs Tomlinson, Mr Sadler, Mrs Williams or Miss Crowley
- E-Safety issues report to Mr Sadler or Mrs Pedder
- Issues relating to a member of staff are reported to the Headteacher
- Issues relating to the Headteacher are reported to the Chair of Governors -Mr M Westwood
- Issues relating to any Governor is reported to the Chair of Governors or if the issue is relating to the Chair of Governors to the Vice Chair of Governors - Mr B Bromley

6.0 Equality Issues

All Red Hall Primary School employees must ensure that our policies and practices relating to equality issues are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law. All members of the local community, customers and other employees have the right to be treated with fairness and equity.

7.0 Interpretation

If an employee is unsure about any aspect of the Code of Conduct they must raise this with their line manager immediately. Employees of the School who disagree with the interpretation of this document (as it may affect them) have the right to raise the matter through the School's Official Grievance Procedure