

Staff Code of Conduct policy

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Employees must not be involved in any procurement or purchasing decision where they have a personal or financial interest. This includes establishing or operating a business that supplies, or seeks to supply, goods or services to their own school or the Trust without full declaration of the interest, prior approval and compliance with the Trust's Conflicts of Interest and Procurement Policies.

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Linked Policies

- Safeguarding
- Child Protection
- ICT Acceptable Use
- Whistle Blowing
- Allegations Against Staff
- Disciplinary Procedure

Objective, Scope and Principles

- a) This Code sets out the professional conduct expected of everyone working for or on behalf of The Balcarras Trust. Staff must act in a way that safeguards pupils, maintains professional standards and supports public confidence in the Trust.
- b) This Code applies to employees, agency and supply staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, governors and trustees, where relevant to their role.
- c) In addition to this Code of Conduct, Teachers must comply with the Teachers' Standards, including Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct. Staff subject to other professional standards must also comply with those requirements.
- d) All staff must act with honesty, integrity and respect for the safety and wellbeing of others. Alleged breaches will be addressed under the procedure appropriate to the individual's employment or engagement status.
- e) This Code is not exhaustive. Staff must exercise sound professional judgement, act in pupils' best interests and seek advice where uncertain. Safeguarding concerns must always be reported.

Setting an Example

Staff are role models and must demonstrate appropriate professional behaviour and conduct. Therefore:

- a) Staff must communicate professionally and must not use abusive, discriminatory, threatening or otherwise inappropriate language.
- b) Staff must comply with the attendance, punctuality and absence-reporting requirements applicable to their role, subject to authorised absence and statutory or contractual rights.
- c) All staff must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage pupils to do the same.
- d) Staff must follow safer-working practices, maintain professional boundaries and seek guidance where a situation could be misunderstood.
- e) Staff must read and comply with the Trust and school policies relevant to their role.

Safeguarding Children

- a) Staff must read and comply with the current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, required sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant safeguarding procedures.
- b) Concerns about a child must be reported immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL. Concerns about an adult working for or on behalf of the Trust must be reported under the allegations or low-level-concerns procedure. Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Professional Relationships with Pupils

- a) Relationships with pupils must remain professional. Sexual or romantic relationships, sexualised conduct, grooming behaviour or any attempt to establish such a relationship are prohibited.
- b) Communication with pupils must use Trust-approved systems and accounts. Personal telephone numbers, email addresses, social-media accounts, messaging services or gaming platforms must not be used.
- c) Staff must maintain professional boundaries outside school and online. They must not arrange private social contact, consume alcohol with pupils or establish personal relationships with pupils outside authorised school activities. Unavoidable community or family contact must be managed professionally and disclosed where it may create a safeguarding concern or conflict.
- d) Any inappropriate or accidental contact from a pupil through a personal communication route must be reported promptly to the DSL or deputy DSL.
- e) Staff must support pupils' learning and welfare while maintaining clear and appropriate professional boundaries.
- f) Certain actions are clearly inappropriate and should not take place. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Unnecessary, punitive, excessive, sexualised or otherwise inappropriate physical contact is prohibited. Necessary physical contact must be lawful, proportionate and consistent with the Trust's safeguarding, reasonable-force, first-aid and intimate-care procedures.
 - Discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation relating to a protected characteristic, or any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - Abusive or humiliating conduct, including excessive shouting, insults, personal attacks, threats or displays of uncontrolled anger.
 - Asking pupils to perform personal errands or become involved in a member of staff's private affairs.
 - Making assessment or educational decisions on irrelevant, discriminatory or favouritism-based grounds.
- g) Staff must not take or store images of pupils on personal devices, lend or borrow money, show favouritism, give inappropriate personal gifts or encourage secrecy.
- h) Staff must report any pupil infatuation, boundary concern or situation that could reasonably be misinterpreted.

Pupil Development

- a) Staff must comply with Trust and school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.
- b) Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.
- c) Staff must follow lawful and reasonable instructions that support pupils' education, welfare and safety. Any instruction believed to be unsafe, unlawful or discriminatory must be raised promptly.

Reporting Concerns

- a) Concerns must be reported promptly through the appropriate route:
 - concerns about a child — DSL or deputy DSL;
 - allegations against staff or other adults — Headteacher;
 - allegations against the Headteacher — Chair of Trustees;

- allegations against the CEO or a trustee — Chair of Trustees or other independent trustee identified in the allegations procedure;
 - allegations against the Chair of Trustees — Vice-Chair or nominated independent trustee;
 - low-level concerns — Headteacher or nominated low-level-concerns lead;
 - health and safety concerns — line manager or Health and Safety Lead;
 - suspected wrongdoing — Whistleblowing Policy.
- b) A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working for or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with this Code but does not meet the harm threshold. It may be no more than a sense of unease or a “nagging doubt”.
- Examples include:
- being over-friendly with pupils;
 - showing favouritism;
 - taking photographs on a personal device;
 - conducting one-to-one activities where the adult cannot easily be seen;
 - humiliating pupils; or
 - inappropriate conduct inside or outside work.
- Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.
- c) Staff must report low-level concerns under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and are encouraged to self-refer where a situation could be misinterpreted. Where uncertain, staff must report the concern.
- d) Concerns will be recorded and managed promptly, fairly, sensitively and proportionately. The Trust will decide whether informal guidance, safeguarding action, investigation, disciplinary action or external referral is required.
- e) Allegations will be managed in accordance with Part Four of the current KCSIE guidance and the Trust’s allegations procedure.
- f) Low-level concerns will be recorded securely and reviewed for patterns or escalation. A concern raised honestly that is not substantiated will not, by itself, result in action against the person reporting it.

Whistleblowing

- a) Staff should raise suspected wrongdoing through the Trust’s Whistleblowing Policy.
- b) Nothing in this Code prevents a worker from making a protected disclosure, reporting a crime or safeguarding concern, contacting an appropriate regulator or prescribed body, or seeking confidential advice from a trade union or legal adviser.
- c) No worker will be subjected to dismissal or detriment for making a protected disclosure in accordance with the law.

Respect and Workplace Conduct

- a) Staff must treat colleagues, pupils, parents, carers, visitors and others with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- b) Staff must not engage in bullying, harassment, victimisation, intimidation, malicious rumours or inappropriate disclosure of confidential information.
- This does not prevent legitimate workplace discussions, trade-union activity, grievances, safeguarding reports or protected disclosures.
- c) Differences of opinion, concerns about colleagues and management feedback must be addressed professionally and through the appropriate management or Trust procedure.

- d) Sexual harassment is prohibited, including conduct involving colleagues or third parties such as pupils, parents, contractors and visitors. Concerns must be reported promptly. The Trust will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and respond appropriately to reports.

Honesty and Integrity

- a) Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- b) Staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010 and must not offer, request, give or accept a bribe or improper advantage. Suspected bribery must be reported under the Trust's Anti-Fraud or Whistleblowing procedures.
- c) Gifts, hospitality or benefits must be declared and managed under the Trust's Anti-Fraud, Gifts and Hospitality procedures. Staff must not accept anything that could influence, or appear to influence, a Trust decision. Personal gifts to individual pupils must not be given unless part of an authorised and transparent school activity.
- d) Staff must provide accurate information concerning their qualifications, employment, professional status and suitability for their role.
- e) Staff must promptly inform HR of any arrest, charge, caution, conviction, safeguarding investigation, professional restriction or other material circumstance that may reasonably affect their suitability to work with children or their ability to perform their role.
- f) Staff are not required to disclose protected cautions or convictions or information they are not legally required to disclose. Each matter will be considered fairly and proportionately.
- g) Staff must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest affecting a Trust decision and must not participate in that decision unless authorised.
- h) Employees must not be involved in any procurement or purchasing decision where they have a personal or financial interest. This includes establishing or operating a business that supplies, or seeks to supply, goods or services to their own school or the Trust without full declaration of the interest, prior approval and compliance with the Trust's Conflicts of Interest and Procurement Policies.

British Values and Political Impartiality

- a) Staff must support and promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- b) Staff must not promote partisan political views to pupils. Where political issues are discussed, reasonable steps must be taken to ensure a balanced presentation of opposing views.
- c) Staff may hold lawful personal beliefs but must not use their position to indoctrinate pupils, discriminate against others, exploit pupils' vulnerability or encourage unlawful conduct.

Conduct Outside Work

- a) Conduct outside work may be considered where it has a clear and material connection with safeguarding, professional suitability, Trust duties, working relationships or the Trust's legitimate interests.
- b) Arrests, allegations or criminal matters will be assessed individually and will not automatically be treated as misconduct.

- c) Staff may undertake additional paid or voluntary work provided it does not create a conflict of interest, breach safeguarding or confidentiality obligations, cause a working-time or health and safety concern, or materially affect their Trust duties.

Technology, Online Safety and Internet Use

- a) Staff must comply with the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use, Online Safety, social media, Data Protection and Information Security policies.
- b) Staff must use appropriate privacy and security settings on personal accounts and must not accept or initiate personal social-media, messaging or gaming contact with current pupils.
- c) Communication with pupils and parents must use Trust-approved systems and be for legitimate professional purposes.
- d) Images or recordings of pupils may only be created, stored or published for an authorised purpose using approved Trust devices and systems.
- e) Trust technology must not be used to access, create, store or distribute illegal, indecent, discriminatory or otherwise prohibited material. Accidental access must be closed and reported promptly.
- f) Personal devices must not be used to photograph, record or store information about pupils. Any exceptional emergency use must be reported immediately and the information transferred or deleted securely as directed.
- g) The Trust may undertake lawful, necessary and proportionate monitoring of Trust systems for safeguarding, security, compliance and investigation purposes. Monitoring will be carried out transparently and in accordance with data-protection law and the Employee Privacy Notice.
- h) Staff must not enter personal, confidential or safeguarding information into an AI system unless it has been approved by the Trust. AI must not be used to create false, misleading, discriminatory or inappropriate content.

Confidentiality

- a) Staff must access, use and share confidential information only for legitimate professional purposes and on a need-to-know basis.
- b) Information may be shared where necessary for safeguarding, authorised by the Trust, permitted or required by law, or requested by an appropriate authority.
- c) Staff must not promise absolute confidentiality to a pupil. Safeguarding information must be reported to the DSL or deputy.
- d) Suspected data breaches, lost records or information sent to the wrong recipient must be reported immediately. Staff must follow the Trust's data-breach reporting procedure.
- e) Nothing in this section prevents a protected disclosure, lawful safeguarding report or confidential consultation with a trade union or legal adviser.
- f) Confidentiality obligations continue after employment or engagement with the Trust ends.

Dress and Appearance

- a) Staff must dress safely, appropriately and professionally for their role and working environment.
- b) Dress requirements will be applied consistently and without discrimination. Religious, cultural, disability, pregnancy and health-related needs will be considered, and reasonable adjustments made where required.

- c) Clothing must provide appropriate coverage and must not display abusive, discriminatory, sexually explicit or partisan political messages.
- d) Footwear must be appropriate to the duties and relevant health and safety risks.

Breaches of the Code

- a) Alleged breaches of this Code will be addressed under the appropriate Trust procedure.
- b) No formal sanction will be imposed without a fair and proportionate process. Serious breaches may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.
- c) The Trust will consider whether referral to the LADO, DBS, Teaching Regulation Agency, police or another relevant authority is required.

Responsibility and Review

- a) The Trust Board retains overall responsibility for this Code. Operational responsibility may be delegated to the CEO, Headteachers, HR, DSLs and nominated trustees.
- b) This Code will be reviewed annually and following any significant change to legislation, statutory guidance or the Trust's structure.