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# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## GUIDANCE ON CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOLS

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Guidance on Code of Conduct in Schools draws together existing School policies and procedures.
- 1.2 This document aims to ensure the highest standards of conduct and will assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability.
- 1.3 The Guidance on Code of Conduct in Schools should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People. This document is provided in Appendix 1.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies to:
  - Employees in Schools employed under the terms of Bucks Pay Employment Conditions.
  - All temporary, casual and agency workers including supply teachers.
- 2.2 Teachers are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with both the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers and, where applicable, this guidance.
- 2.3 Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities



- 3.1 Both Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers and employees have a responsibility within this guidance.

Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers will:

- Apply the policies and procedures detailed in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Ensure all new employees are made aware of the Guidance on Code of Conduct on commencing employment at the School.
- Deal promptly, thoroughly and fairly with any matter arising from a breach of this guidance.

- 3.2 Employees will:

- Act in accordance with the Principles set out in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Never use their position for personal gain.

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- Through procedures outlined in the relevant School's policies, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or breach of this guidance.
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard such that confidence in their integrity is sustained.

3.3 Employees in roles that have their own professional code of conduct must:

- Appropriately apply the standards of their profession in line with this guidance.

3.4 In relation to employees in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body as agent of the County Council.

3.5 In relation to employees in Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body.

#### **4. Principles**



4.1 This Guidance on Code of Conduct in Schools is founded on the following principles:

- To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees of the Council/Governing Body.
- To support the Council/Governing Body's visions and values, policies and procedures.
- To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers.
- To ensure all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers treat colleagues and those they interact with during the course of their work with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this guidance on any grounds including grounds of sex, race, trade union activities, disability, age, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, religion, belief or any other personal characteristic or quality.

#### **5. Safeguarding**

5.1 The Council/Governing Body has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident and safe to do so.

5.2 All employees who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

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- 5.3 It is essential that all employees are aware of and refer to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People. (Please see Appendix 1.)

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



- 6.1 Employees may, in the course of their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Council/Governing Body requires that the confidentiality of this information be respected. (see the Toolkit for further information on the Data Protection Act.)
- 6.2 Employees must not use information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary.
- 6.3 Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of the School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate use of social networking websites such as Facebook.

## **7. Commercial Practices including Gifts and Hospitality**

- 7.1 The principal aim of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Practices is to ensure that the School's business is conducted in accordance with the very highest standards.
- 7.2 Employees should never use their position for personal gain and should seek to uphold and enhance the reputation of the School by:
- a) maintaining a high standard of integrity in all professional relationships;
  - b) fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
  - c) complying both with the letter and the spirit of:
    - i. the law;
    - ii the Governing Body Standing Orders;
    - iii any additional guidance supplied by the Council/Governing Body;
    - iv the Conditions of Service of Employees of the Council/Governing Body.
  - d) rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.
- 7.3 The guidelines in Appendix 2 of this document express the obligations of employees which exist in legislation or are expressed or implied conditions of appointment.

## **8. Prevention of Fraud & Corruption**

- 8.1 The Council/Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services and management of its resources and assets.
- 8.2 All employees are expected to act with integrity at all times and to comply with legal requirements, rules, procedures and good practice.

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- 8.3 Further guidance can be obtained in the School's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework.

## **9. Raising Concerns in the Workplace – Grievances and Whistleblowing**



- 9.1 The Council/Governing Body believes that an employee should report any significant concern they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the School without fear of victimisation.
- 9.2 In the first instance, employee concerns should be raised via the Schools internal complaints procedure. (see Toolkit for further information.)
- 9.3 Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, employees can report unresolved issues under the School's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
- 9.4 If an employee has a concern regarding their own employment they should raise this under the School's Grievance Policy and Procedures.

## **10. Dignity and Equality at Work**

- 10.1 The Council/Governing Body wishes to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
- 10.2 The Council/Governing Body is committed to achieving equality of choice as an employer of people, provider of services, educator and community leader.
- 10.3 All employees are expected to adopt the School's vision of equality of opportunity.
- 10.4 The School's Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to.

## **11. Close Personal Relationships at Work**

- 11.1 The Council/Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on School services.
- 11.2 The Council/Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school), whom they meet as a result of their employment.
- 11.3 Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively and managed promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully.
- 11.4 Further guidance can be found in the Close Personal Relationships at Work documentation in Appendix 3.

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## **12. New Appointments**



- 12.1 Employees involved in appointing new staff must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit alone. There is a strong risk of illegality if an employee makes an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the applicant to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in appointments where they are related to an applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them or have knowledge of them in another context e.g. business associates.
- 12.2 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.
- 12.3 All applicants will be asked to declare any relationship to the Chair of Governors or Divisional Manager School Improvement. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.
- 12.4 For further guidance, Teachers/Headteachers and Line Managers should refer to the document titled Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Employees in Schools. This is available on Schoolsweb.

## **13. Work for Other Employers**

- 13.1 Applicants for employment with the Council/Governing Body will be asked to disclose to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, any employment they may have with other employers. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.
- 13.2 All employees must notify their Headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are undertaking work for another employer.
- 13.3 Employees should refer to the Government Working Time Regulations that came into effect in 1998, when considering additional appointments or employment. (see Toolkit for further guidance.)

## **14. Communication, Computer Usage and the Internet**

- 14.1 Use of the School's equipment, systems and network is provided as part of an individual's work role.
- 14.2 Employees should be familiar with the relevant School policies surrounding computer usage, internet access and electronic communications.
- 14.3 Misuse of the equipment, systems and network may be grounds for disciplinary action under the School's Conduct & Discipline Policy & Procedure, which, if found to constitute serious misconduct, could render an individual liable to dismissal.
- 14.4 Use of technology to contact students can suggest an informality which is inappropriate. Great care should be exercised over the use of communications technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites and blogs unless contact via these routes is required and for

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which permission has been given by a senior manager e.g. field trips and expeditions.  
(see Toolkit for further guidance)

## **15. Alcohol and Drugs Misuse**

- 15.1 The Local Authority has a policy on Substance Misuse in the Workplace which is aimed at ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drugs at work.
- 15.2 Those representing the School are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol.
- 15.3 Inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy e.g. Conduct and Discipline, Capability.

## **16. Breach of the Guidance on Code of Conduct**

- 16.1 Failure to comply with this guidance and associated School policies may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 16.2 The Council/Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.

### **Approved**

Co-Headteacher

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Headteacher

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Governing Body

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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