



Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Audience:	School and academy staff, particularly Headteachers and administrative staff Local Governing Bodies
Reviewed:	September 2021 Review September 2022
Other related policies / procedures	As referenced in document
Owner	HR
Policy / procedure model	MAT policy: all Crofty schools use this policy Aligned: Policy to be adapted to school where indicated School policy: specific to needs of the school

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CODE OF CONDUCT

1. **Introduction**

All employees have personal and legal responsibilities, including; treating others with dignity and respect; acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by **all** staff.

This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where employees need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in the school and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours through reference to the documents highlighted throughout the Code. If these documents are not supplied at induction, the employee should ask the school for copies.

2. **Compliance with the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. Failure to comply with it and with the associated policies may result in disciplinary action being taken and the Trust reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

3. **Personal, Private and Professional behaviour and conduct**

3.1 **Treating other people with dignity and respect**

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents/carers with dignity and respect.

Staff are required stay up to date with and comply with their duties under the Equalities Act 2010 in respect of colleagues, students and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in schools. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

3.2 **Appropriate relationships with children**

Trust employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both young people and themselves. Staff are required to read and understand school policies on child protection and safeguarding.

3.3 **Professional behaviour – demonstrate honesty and integrity, upholding public trust and confidence in the school.**

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school or trust into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.

3.4 Criminal actions

School employees must inform the Headteacher (governing Body if the employee is a Headteacher) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Headteacher or Governing Body will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the school.

3.5 Personal and Private Conduct

Staff members 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. School staff uphold public trust in the school and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries
- 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.
- **ensuring they remain up to date with current regulations and the law in relation to COVID-19. Failure to follow them may result in disciplinary action.** (COVID Addendum)

School employees must inform the Headteacher (governing Body if the employee is a Headteacher) immediately in a change of circumstances involving any statutory agencies for example, Police, Social Care etc. They must also inform the headteacher/governing body, where there may be 'transferable risk' where incidents are alleged to have occurred outside school and/or which don't necessarily include children; domestic violence, drug misuse, neighbourhood disputes. Failure to notify the school would be a breach of the Code of Conduct policy and may result in disciplinary action being taken. (See KCSIE20 for further information/guidance).

3.6 British Values

School employees will fully support and actively promote the British Values of Democracy, The rule of Law, Individual liberty, Mutual respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

3.7 In addition the school expects staff to:

- Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first.
- Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their classroom practice.
- Help children to become confident and successful learners.
- Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers.

Work as part of a whole-school team.
Cooperate with other professional colleagues.

Required Reading:

- School's Safeguarding policy and procedure / Handbook for staff: Child Protection
- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2020
- Additional guidance/policies provided by the school, in particular Behaviour Policy, Positive handling /physical restraint, Use of Mobile Phones Policy, Use of Images, E-safety policy, Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation policy.

4. Declaration of interests

An employee is required to declare an interest where the group or organisation to which the employee belongs would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

Employees should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the school their relationship with any individual(s) where this might cause a conflict with school activities. For example, a relationship with a governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to Crofty trust.

Add financial gain

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and therefore if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to take advice from their school or union.

All declarations, including nil returns, should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher on the Trust Annual Declaration of Interests Form. It is the responsibility of all staff to update this promptly when their circumstances change.

Further information can be found on the Crofty Conflict of Interests Policy.

5. Probity of records and other documents

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Where an employee who has claimed any benefit, including housing benefit, either directly or indirectly and has failed to disclose their full earnings, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the police.

6. Financial inducements

6.1 Financial Procedures

All school employees must comply with the Crofty Multi Academy Trust's Financial Procedures Handbook. Employees should familiarise themselves with these Procedures: some of the principal employee requirements are summarised below.

6.2 Declaration of gifts

Any gifts that are received should be declared in writing to the Headteacher on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality form with the exception of those items specifically identified in sections 6.4 and 6.5 below. This form can be requested from the School Administrator. This document shall remain available for inspection by Crofty MAT's Audit.

6.3 Gifts or hospitality to an employee

Where a business contact offers a personal gift, personal payment or other incentive such as secondary employment to an employee, these should not be accepted and should be returned with a suitable official letter. Such offers should be declared to the Headteacher and recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

If it is not possible to return gifts then the employee who deals with that supplier should declare the gift to the Headteacher who will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the school and should be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

The only exceptions to these are:

- Low cost, functional items suitable for business use rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo e.g. diaries, calendars and pens. These items may be accepted and do not have to be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
- Gifts offered by parents or students to school staff to express their thanks, such as boxes of chocolates. Gifts with an individual value of £30 or less may be accepted. Such gifts do not have to be declared in writing or be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Gifts exceeding the value of £30 must be declared to the Trust Finance Manager for inclusion on the register of gifts. A decision will be made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the headteacher to determine the appropriate use of the gift. For the avoidance of doubt employees must always refuse gifts of money.

Where hospitality in the form of meals and drinks is offered by a business contact, this is only acceptable where it forms part of a normal business meeting (for example, refreshments at training events or meals at evening meetings). Offers of hospitality to specific events, such as dinner or sporting event, should only be accepted after authorisation from the Headteacher. These should be approved where there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the school and the hospitality would not expose the school to criticism that the business contract was exerting undue influence. These should be recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Visits by employees to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business and authorised by the school, shall be at the school's expense.

6.4 Gifts or hospitality to the school

Where a business contact sends a gift in excess of £30 value, to the school, this should not be accepted and should be returned to the supplier. Such offers should be declared to the Headteacher and recorded in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

If it is not possible to return the gift, the employee who usually deals with the supplier should declare the gift to the Headteacher who will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the school and should be included in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

The only exceptions to this are low cost, functional items suitable for business use (as opposed to personal use), such as diaries, calendars or pens, which may be accepted and do not have to be declared on the Register of Business Interests.

6.5 Use of school contacts

Apart from participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups for their members, employees shall not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade / discount prices for non-school activities.

Also see

- Crofty Multi Academy Trust's Financial Procedures Handbook – (see school office)

7. Use of school premises and equipment

School equipment and premises are available only for school-related activities and should not be used for fulfilment of another job or post or for excessive or regular personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the Headteacher.

This includes photocopy facilities, stationary, telephones and computers and premises. Any school equipment that is used outside of school premises, for example laptops, should be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the Headteacher.

8. Other employment

Employees are permitted to take up secondary employment outside the school, as long as the activity does not constitute a conflict of interest, adversely affect their primary employment at the school or exceed the legal maximum working week of 48 hours as defined by the Working Time Regulations.

The secondary employment must be undertaken outside the working hours of the employee's normal post and employees are required to keep the Headteacher (CEO if the employee is the Headteacher) informed of their employment at other organisations.

9. Health and Safety

Employees must adhere to the school's Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.

This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either at school or off-site) by complying with statutory and school guidelines and collaborating with colleagues, agencies and Crofty Multi Academy Trust.

Required reading:

- School's health and safety Policy

10. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. Adults who work with pupils should ensure they are dressed in clothing which is appropriate to their role and tasks they undertake. All staff should take care to ensure that their clothing is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative. Clothing should be appropriate for the workplace and present a professional impression of the school and the member of staff themselves. It should be absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.

11. Use of alcohol and illegal drugs

The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the school or local authority's reputation and public confidence.

12. Use of communication systems

The school has the right to monitor emails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems by employees.

Employees should be aware that the school has a right to access employees' personal email and computer files if required for investigation of misuse.

It is recommended that employees do not use school systems (phone, email, and computers) for personal use. Inappropriate usage, which includes excessive or regular use may result in disciplinary action for the employee and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Inappropriate use of email and internet systems also includes viewing, publication or circulation of illegal or offensive material, viewing, publication or circulation of junk mail, including chain letters, jokes or large attachments, gambling, gaming; these will be treated as disciplinary matters.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential. Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees who receive inappropriate communications should inform their Headteacher or Senior Manager immediately.

Staff are permitted to have their mobile phones about their person; however there is a clear expectation that all personal use is limited to allocated lunch and/or tea breaks. Mobile phones should not be used in the presence of pupils even if this is within a staff break time; the staff room, offices, classroom cupboards or the school reception are all suitable places to make and receive calls during a break if there are no children present.

Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off and calls and texts must not be taken or made during lesson time. This should be agreed with the Headteacher in advance.

Practitioners are not permitted, in any circumstance to use their devices for taking, recording or sharing images and 'mobile free' areas must be observed at all times.

Practitioners are not permitted to use their own personal phones for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting.

Required reading:

- Online Safeguarding Policy, Staff Acceptable Usage Policy

13. Confidentiality

All employees at the school and the Governing Body come into contact with a significant volume of data and information in relation to pupils, staff, school activities and many other matters. There is an obligation to read and observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

13.1 Managing data

Under the Data Protection Act, staff are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

13.2 Disclosing data

Staff should not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or Crofty Multi Academy Trust to other parties, for example, parents, colleagues or internet blogs. There are particular exceptions to this; for example disclosure of suspected or alleged abuse of a pupil to Child Protection officers; discussion with a person accompanying or representing an employee in a formal meeting or

disclosure under the Whistleblowing procedure. All communication with the media must be directed through the Headteacher or their nominee.

There are circumstances in which staff are obliged to release pupil data, for example, parents seeking information about pupil progress or other colleagues in the school.

Staff should be aware that, from time to time, information about employees' salaries is matched with other public sector information (for example housing benefits) in order to prevent fraudulent claims.

13.4 Access to data

Everyone has the right to request access to data that is held about them and such requests should be made to the Headteacher who will address the request.

Required reading:

- Data Protection Policy

14. Copyright

Copyright legislation should be displayed next to photocopier machines and employees are required to adhere to the guidance provided about use of educational resources.

Required reading:

- Copyright notices in school