



St Albans RC High School

Code of Conduct for School Based Employees

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| ORIGIN: | TCBC: Version 1 Dated January 2017 |
| COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE: | Recruitment & Resources |
| LEAD MEMBER: | Business Manager |
| DATE APPROVED: | 08/02/2023 |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS NAME: | Chris Evans |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SIGNATURE: |  |
| REVIEW DATE: | 08/02/2024 |

St Alban's RC High School is a voluntary aided school and the governing body is the employer of the staff who work there. The contract of employment is between the school's governing body and the employee. The governing body has all the employment responsibilities that this entails including the appointment and dismissal of staff.

1. Why we have a Code of Conduct

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code is to ensure that school based employees understand what is expected of them in order for the Council to provide services of the highest quality, fairly and efficiently.
- 1.2 In performing your duties you are required to act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity. These behaviors are to be applied to all areas of work undertaken on behalf of the Council including activities carried out by employees acting as members of companies or voluntary organisations.
- 1.3 Although the management of school based staff is delegated to each school's governing body, the employees who work in Community Schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools, Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools are employees of Torfaen County Borough Council. As such they are accountable to and owe a duty to the Council. You must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code and the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law. Where you are a member of a professional body e.g. Education Workforce Council you are also expected to follow any related Code of Conduct.

2 What is required from the Employee?

- 2.1 Compliance with this Code of Conduct is a requirement under your conditions of employment. As an employee you are accountable to your school and the Council and therefore must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 If you do not comply with this Code of Conduct, your school may take disciplinary action against you in accordance with the "*School Staff Disciplinary Procedures*". This may have serious consequences for you including the possibility of dismissal from your post.
- 2.3 The Code of Conduct applies to school based employees but where you are a Headteacher you should report to and take up any concern that you may have with your Chair of Governors. These are the requirements under the Code of Conduct for school based employees: -
 - you should read and get to know the contents and meaning of the code;
 - on commencement of your employment you must sign a declaration that you have received and understood this Code of Conduct;
 - if your circumstances change from the last declaration you must notify your Headteacher immediately of any matters specified in the code;
 - you will be expected to review the code and the declarations you have made annually to ensure that you understand and comply with what is expected of you;
 - it is your responsibility to ask your Headteacher to explain anything that you do not understand;
 - you should discuss with your Headteacher if you do not know how to comply or have difficulty in complying with any part of the code;

- you should tell your Headteacher if you believe the services the school provides fall short of the standards in this code;
- you should tell your Headteacher about anyone else breaking the code and/or breaking the law. If in any doubt please refer to the “*Whistleblowing Policy for School Staff*”.

2.4 The matters covered in this code are fairly comprehensive but are not considered all embracing. You should assume that conduct or actions that are not specified but which are similar to those described or relate to similar standards and principles to those set out are also covered.

3. General Responsibilities at Work

3.1 You will be expected to work within the scope of your contract of employment performing your duties to the highest possible standards with honesty, integrity and impartiality and be accountable for your own action.

3.2 You will be expected to treat others with respect, fairness and dignity at all times abiding by the school’s “*Dignity at Work Policy*” and any other policies relating to equality issues agreed by the school’s governing body in addition to the requirements of the law.

3.3 You will be expected to be welcoming, helpful, informative and courteous as well as being professional to the public and to all our internal and external customers.

3.4 You must be presentable and suitably dressed for your particular job including wearing safety clothing and equipment in line with your responsibilities under the Health and Safety Act 1974 if appropriate to your duties.

3.5 You must be ready and able to carry out your duties at agreed times.

3.6 You must comply with the school’s policies and procedures.

3.7 You must adhere to the safeguarding and welfare requirements of all children and young people that the school has responsibility for.

3.8 You must ensure that you use public funds entrusted to you on behalf of the school in a responsible and lawful manner and must not use property, vehicles or other facilities of the school for personal use unless authorised to do so. Public funds entrusted to you also include salary and wages. In the event that you find, or are notified that you have received an overpayment, the school has an obligation to ask the Council to seek to recover the money. You will be expected to work with the school in complying with the highest standards of integrity in helping meet this requirement in a measured and reasonable manner in accordance with agreed school and Council procedures.

4. Confidentiality and the Use of Information

4.1 In your job, and in the event that you leave the school’s employment, in respect of any confidential information you come across you must maintain the privacy and confidentiality of such information at all times unless you are expressly authorised to divulge it or are required to do so by law.

- 4.2 You must take time to read, understand and comply with the policies and procedures on information security.
- 4.3 You must ensure that all data is kept secure (i.e. locked away or protected by computer passwords, that are under no circumstance disclosed to others) and that data on computer screens and paper files are not left within the view of unauthorised persons.
- 4.4 You must not disclose the school's, the Council's or any other organisation's information to any person who does not have a legitimate business interest with the school or Council.
- 4.5 You must only access data in relation to the role that you undertake. You must not access any data that relates to yourself, your family or friends or for any personal reasons.
- 4.6 You must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and not use data held by the school or Council for any purpose other than that for which it is registered to be kept and used.
- 4.7 You must refer any request from the media for information to your Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the Council's Communications Team.
- 4.8 If you are in any doubt on any aspect of confidentiality or data security you must seek advice from your Headteacher.

5 Political Neutrality

- 5.1 Whilst most school based posts will not be politically restricted, you must follow every lawfully expressed policy of the school or Council and must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work. Where your post is politically restricted (by reason of the post you hold, the nature of the work you do, or the salary you are paid i.e. Grade 10 or above) you will be aware of this upon appointment and you must comply with any statutory restrictions on your political activities. If your post is politically restricted you cannot stand for a political office or engage in certain political activities such as canvassing or speaking publicly.
- 5.2 Employee of the Council are disqualified from becoming or remaining a Member of this Council.

6 Dealing with Pupils, Parents, School Governors, Elected Members, Contractors, Suppliers and Consultants

- 6.1 You must be polite and professional in your dealings with school governors and elected members and deal efficiently with all their enquiries without bias and regardless of their political allegiances.
- 6.2 You must provide professional advice, not influenced by political views or preferences, which does not compromise the political neutrality in your role as an employee of the Council.

- 6.3 You must report to your Headteacher at once if a school governors or elected member asks or pressures you to deal with any matter outside school or Council procedures or policy.
- 6.4 If your role means that you come into contact with contractors, suppliers and consultants, for example, purchasing goods, commissioning and approving works or services done by contractors you must abide by Council's standing orders, contract procedures and financial procedures included in the Council's Constitution and Guide to Financial Management.
- 6.5 Any orders and contracts must be awarded by fair and open competition. No special favours should be shown to businesses with any connections to employees. You must therefore declare any relationship you have or have had of a business or private nature with external contractors/suppliers or potential contractors/suppliers of the school or Council in writing to your Headteacher.
- 6.6 If you engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you should notify your Headteacher, in writing, of this relationship.

7 Separation of Roles during Tendering

- 7.1 If you are involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors, you should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Council.
- 7.2 If you have both a client and contractor responsibility you must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.
- 7.3 If you are employed in contractor or client units you must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers and other contractors and sub-contractors.
- 7.4 If you are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors you must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 7.5 If you are contemplating a management buyout you should, as soon as you have formed a definite intention, inform your Headteacher, in writing, and withdraw from the contract awarding processes.
- 7.6 You should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them.

8 Involvement in the appointment of Staff

- 8.1 If you are involved in the recruitment and appointment of staff you must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit in order to avoid any possible accusation of bias and unfair treatment.

8.2 You must not be involved in any part of the recruitment process, or any other decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions for any other employee, or prospective employee, to whom you are related, or with whom you have or have had a close personal relationship outside work.

9 Personal Life and Interests

9.1 Whilst your private life is your own concern, you must not put yourself in a position where your job and your personal interests conflict. This includes behavior which, because of the nature of your employment, would undermine the school's confidence and trust in you.

9.2 This will apply where you are facing civil or criminal charges, regardless of whether they were incurred on or off duty. You must tell your Headteacher immediately if you are charged, cautioned or convicted with any offence which is in any way relevant to your employment in a school such as: -

- child protection offences;
- drug offences;
- crimes of violence (including domestic abuse);
- dishonesty; or
- driving offences where your job involves the use of a school vehicle or using your own vehicle on school business.

9.3 You must also inform your Headteacher immediately where you are in a relationship with a person who has been charged, cautioned or convicted with any offence which is in any way relevant to your employment.

9.4 If you are in any doubt consult your Headteacher.

9.5 The Council recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whilst you are not acting on behalf of the school or Council you must be aware that you can still cause damage to the school or Council if you are recognised as being one of its employees.

9.6 You are allowed to say that you work for the school and your school and the Council recognise that it is natural for its staff to sometimes want to discuss their work on social media. However, your online profile (e.g., the name of a blog or a Twitter name, etc.) should not contain the school's or Council's name.

9.7 Any communication that you make in a personal capacity through social media must not: -

- bring the school or Council into disrepute, for example, criticising or arguing with parents, school governors, customers, elected members, colleagues or other organisations;
- breach confidentiality, for example revealing trade secrets or information owned by the organisation;
- divulging confidential information about an individual (such as a pupil, colleague, school governor, parent, elected member or customer) or other organisation;

- discuss the school's or Council's internal workings (such as deals or future business plans that have not been communicated to the public);
- do anything that could be considered as discriminatory such as bullying or harassment of any individual, making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender re-assignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
- make defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
- posting images that are inappropriate or may cause offence to others or links to inappropriate content.

9.8 You must use the school's or Councils property (including information that belongs to the school or Council) or equipment to do private work (for example making phone calls, postage, ordering personal items, using a school vehicle or using IT systems). More specific guidance is, however, available by reference to the Education Workforce Council's a "*Guide to Using Social Media Responsibly*" and Torfaen County Borough Council's "*Guidance on the Use of Social Media*" and the "*(ICT) Security Policy*" and you are advised to familiarise yourself with their contents.

<http://swoop.torfaen.gov.uk/Intranet/Document-Library/HR-Policies/Social-Media-Guidance-on-the-use-of.pdf>

10 **Additional Employment**

- 10.1 You must declare any other employment or business you are involved in, including any voluntary work that you undertake or any membership of any organisation not open to the public which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct. This includes any firm in which you are a partner or remunerated director.
- 10.2 The school's governing body will not stop you taking on additional employment as long as it does not affect your duties and responsibilities or conflict with the interests of or weaken public confidence in the school or Council. However no additional work whether paid or unpaid can be undertaken during the times you are contracted to work for the school. The only exception is polling duties during elections.
- 10.3 If you are thinking about taking on additional paid work you should get permission, which will not unreasonably be refused, in writing from your Headteacher (Chair of Governors if you are a Headteacher) beforehand. This applies to any employment, for example, taking up office in an outside organisation or working with charities. It also includes special arrangements such as, for example, a volunteer reservist in the armed forces.
- 10.4 If you are paid for work or undertake unpaid work which is the same or similar to that for which you do for the school or Council you must not use assets or information belonging to the school or Council. This includes IT systems and customer information. You must also ensure that the customer realises and acknowledges the private nature of the work you are doing which is in no way connected to the business of the school or Council.

- 10.5 You must declare to your Headteacher, in writing, any financial and non-financial interests that you consider could bring about conflict with the school's or Council's interests.

11 Gifts, Hospitality, Sponsorship and Endorsements

- 11.1 You should be aware that it is a criminal offence under the Bribery Act 2010 for you to corruptly receive any gift, fee, reward or advantage in your role as an officer of the Council. The penalties for conviction of corruption are severe. For an individual, the penalty can be a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment and a fine and there are unlimited fines for companies. It is imperative that you are aware of your legal responsibilities.
- 11.2 You should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the school or Council in the Community. You should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the school or Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the school or Council should be seen to be represented. You should request, in writing, and receive your Headteacher's written permission prior to any attendance.
- 11.3 You should avoid accepting from anyone, gifts, hospitality (other than official hospitality such as a civic reception or a working lunch duly authorised by your school or the Council), material benefits or services for yourself or any person which might place you or appear to place you under any obligation.
- 11.4 When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the school or Council.
- 11.5 You should not accept significant personal gifts from current or potential contractors and outside suppliers although insignificant items of token value such as pens, diaries, etc. are acceptable.
- 11.6 Acceptance of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear that hospitality is corporate rather than personal, and/or where the Headteacher or school governing body gives consent in advance, and/or where the Headteacher or school governing body is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised or could be seen as a reward following the awarding of a contract. Where visits to inspect equipment, etc are required, you should ensure that the school meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.
- 11.7 You must ensure that all gifts and hospitality are properly recorded in school.
- 11.8 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity you or any partner, spouse or relative must not benefit from the sponsorship. In the event that there is any benefit a full disclosure must be made to your Headteacher before any sponsorship is agreed.

11.9 Where the school or Council wishes to sponsor an event or service, you, or any partner, spouse or relative, must not benefit from the sponsorship. In the event that there is any benefit a full disclosure must be made to your Headteacher before any sponsorship is agreed.

11.10 You must exercise caution before providing any statement endorsing the quality or operation of any product or service that may be used for publicity purposes. You should therefore seek advice from your Headteacher where such circumstances arise.

12 What do I need to do?

12.1 You will need to complete the Declaration Forms attached as Appendix 1 of this Code of Conduct. This will show that you have no interests to be declared within the terms of this Code or to list those interests that require declaration.

12.2 The Declaration Forms must be completed by all school based employees at the start of their employment with the school or upon any change in role with any changes of circumstances being notified to their Headteacher immediately. The employee must then complete a fresh Declaration Form.

12.3 Each year you will be expected to remind yourself of the requirements of the Code of Conduct ensuring that you are aware what is expected of you.

12.4 Headteachers will be responsible for ensuring that declarations are completed by the appropriate employees on appointment or promotion. Completed forms will be held securely in school. The Headteacher (the Chair of Governors in the case of the Headteacher) will be responsible for deciding whether anything revealed in the declaration is incompatible with the duties of the employee making it. Where instances of incompatibility occur which cannot be resolved to the Headteacher's satisfaction by agreement, a report will be submitted to the Chair of Governors. Where the Headteacher is concerned and any instance of cannot be resolved to the Chair of Governor's satisfaction by agreement, a report will be submitted to a panel of three governors appointed with delegated responsibility by the full governing body. The employee and if appropriate, his/her trade union, will be consulted on such a report prior to its submission.

13 Investigations

13.1 Where either the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) has arranged for an investigation in accordance with the school's policies and procedures you must comply with any requirements made in connection with any investigation.

14 Whistleblowing

14.1 In the event that you become aware of activities which you believe to be illegal, improper, unethical or otherwise inconsistent with this Code, you should report the matter, acting in accordance with the employee's rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 as amended (2013) and with the school's "*Whistleblowing Policy for School Staff*".

14.2 The school's "*Whistleblowing Policy for School Staff*" tells you what to do and what you can expect to be done in a "whistleblowing" situation. This Code can be located on the Council's Intranet site.

15 Conclusion

15.1 The standards laid down in this Code are considered to be fundamental to the reputation of your school and the Council. As such, uncertainty on your part as to their meaning will not be accepted as a reason for your failing to comply with them so if in any doubt whatsoever please ask for advice from your Headteacher.

**Education Human Resources
January 2017**



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL BASED EMPLOYEES

Torfaen County Borough Council expects every employee to behave in a highly professional manner. All employees are expected to read and understand this Code of Conduct as it outlines the standards we expect of you.

Please complete in Block Capitals

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Name | |
| Post Title | |
| School | |
| Department/Team | |

If you have no information to declare please complete section A otherwise complete section B.

Section A

I confirm that I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and what is expected of me. I declare that I have no facts or circumstances that I am required to disclose.

I understand that should my circumstances change I will immediately complete a further declaration with the required details.

| | | | |
|--------|--|-------|--|
| Signed | | Dated | |
|--------|--|-------|--|

On completion of Section A forward this form to Headteacher (or Chair of Governors)

Section B

I confirm that I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and what is expected of me. I declare the following fact and circumstances.

I understand that should my circumstances change I will immediately complete a further declaration with the required details.

Please give full details:

| | | | |
|--------|--|-------|--|
| Signed | | Dated | |
|--------|--|-------|--|

On completion of Section B this form should be sent to your Headteacher (or Chair of Governors).

Headteacher (or Chair of Governors):

This is confirmation that the interests declared by the employee above have been considered and where necessary guidance and advice issued. Appropriate advice has been sought from HR and the Head of Service as required.

| | | | |
|----------------|--|-------|--|
| Print Name | | | |
| Post Title | | | |
| School | | | |
| Contact Number | | | |
| Signed | | Dated | |

Please retain this form securely in school so that it is available for inspection where required.