CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

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Code of Conduct for Schools

Policy September 2026-27

Inclusion Statement:
This policy has been developed to promote an inclusive school where every pupil is valued, supported and challenged to achieve their potential. In implementing this policy, the school will have due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice, and its commitment to removing barriers to learning, participation and achievement for all pupil, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those with protected characteristics.

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Introduction

This Code is binding on all school employees. It sets out the expected standards of behaviour of all employees. It provides a framework for employees that will help to maintain and improve standards. The code also protects employees from misunderstanding or criticism.

It does not replace other employment polices, procedures, regulations and rules and codes of practice operating in the school.

The Code is not a complete list of what you can and cannot do. Its aim is to set out clearly the basic ground rules that all employees must observe.

We must all:

- give our communities in Brent the highest standards of service;
- work in partnership with governors, senior staff and colleagues, fostering good working relationships;
- do nothing to harm the school's' reputation, in and out of work;
- work consistently and in support of the school's policies and procedures;
- abide by the following seven guiding principles: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The school places great value on the key contribution of all employees in achieving these aims, and is committed to creating a working environment where staff are highly motivated and able to provide excellent education to the pupils of Brent. In return, employees can expect to be treated courteously and with respect by governors, senior staff, colleagues and members of the public.

Breaches of the Code and the standards it sets down may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. We expect all employees to operate within the law, both inside and outside of the workplace. Unlawful or criminal behaviour at work will result in disciplinary action, and even away from work, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

Staff working on behalf of the school who are not employees (e.g. agency, supply, contractors etc.) should have due regard to these standards of behaviour since they are representing the school. However, it is recognised that such staff are not bound by the school's employment policies/procedures in the same way as the school's employees. Nonetheless, any such staff whose behaviour falls below the expected standards of behaviour outlined in this Code could have an impact on the continuation of their contractual relationship with the school.

Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

The school has in place a disciplinary procedure, which gives examples of the types of breaches of standards of behaviour that are considered to be misconduct, and therefore would result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. Some breaches are so serious that they are considered to be gross misconduct. If proven, this can result in the employee's dismissal from the school's service. The disciplinary procedure also gives examples of gross misconduct.

This Code of Conduct also sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all our employees, and you should understand that breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. Some breaches of the Code are so serious that they are considered to be gross misconduct, which if proven can result in the employee's dismissal from the school's service.

Working for our school community in Brent

Schools can have a real impact on the quality of life of the communities that we serve. It is vital that we get it right and our standards have to take into account the special requirements of staff in schools. Our work is often politically sensitive and open to public scrutiny. The public is interested in what we do and how we do it. Success can depend on public confidence in our staff honesty, professionalism and hard work.

Our work is publicly funded. If we are to be above suspicion, any payments or other benefits we personally receive must be properly due to us, and any expenditure we incur on behalf of the school must be lawful and justifiable.

We are employed to work with and for the people of Brent. This requires a positive commitment to public service and means putting pupils, parents and local communities first. We have a duty to give our best at all times, to be open, helpful and professional in our approach. Our parents and carers are entitled to have confidence in our services, which depends on all of us being considerate, responsible, sensitive and mindful of the need to respect confidentiality. Of course, the school is also committed to protecting its employees from aggressive, abusive or bullying behaviour from members of the public, including parents and carers.

While working in this school it is important that:

- you are polite, responsive and helpful;
- you comply with any Dress Code that is applicable;
- you never make remarks that are racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, offensive to people who are disabled or of other religions;
- you do not harass or discriminate against any member of the public or anyone you meet in the course of your work. The school treats very seriously complaints of harassment or discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or age;
- you avoid any conduct in public areas of the school or other council buildings which may discredit the school.

Political neutrality

Employees serve their governing body as a whole and must treat all governors equally and make sure that their individual rights are respected.

Employees must not allow their own political opinions to interfere with their work.

Employees may not display political posters, including election material, in areas of school premises or other council buildings which the public has access to. Trade union representatives may display trade union/association views on current issues on the appropriate authorised notice boards within the school, or in other places with the permission of the head teacher.

Where political views are brought to the attention of pupils within the school or during extracurricular activities they should be in the form of a balanced presentation of opposing views and be relevant to the subject being taught

You must disclose to your head teacher any family, business or personal relationships with governors where this may, or may appear, to put you in a position to exercise improper influence over the workings of the school

You must not canvass members on employment related matters nor seek to influence governors prior to any meetings of the Staffing, Appointments or Appeals Committee other than in the context of giving proper professional advice. This does not include Trade Union representatives who may wish to make representations about relevant issues.

The School supports the system of collective bargaining and believe in the principle of solving industrial relations problems through discussion and agreement where possible. Trade unions are integral to this process and staff have an option of joining a union of their choice should they so wish.

Working for your manager

You are expected to show loyalty to the school and to support its managers. A climate of mutual trust, confidence and respect between managers and staff is essential to achieving the school's aims and objectives, meet its performance targets and providing the highest quality of education.

In performing your duties, make sure that you:

- work diligently and reliably, and never neglect your duty;
- co-operate with managers, always be polite, helpful and respectful;
- never lie to, deceive, abuse or undermine them;
- carry out any reasonable management instructions;
- fill in honestly any document, form or record your managers need for work;
- never falsify any document;
- never wilfully destroy any document that you know is needed by your managers;
- be at work on time;
- tell your manager if you will be late for work (for example, for a doctor's visit);
- agree in advance with your manager and obtain their approval for any leave or other time off you want;
- make routine medical appointments outside of working hours or during school holidays where possible;
- follow the school's rules on reporting any absence, including absence due to sickness;
- never claim sick leave when you are not sick;
- if you are on sick leave, act sensibly to speed your recovery and return to work, and do nothing deliberately that you know would delay your recovery or worsen the problem;
- do not drink alcohol to the extent that it adversely affects your work, performance, attendance or behaviour. You should not be under the influence of alcohol, including having alcohol on your breath during the school day;
- never drink alcohol on school property unless at an approved social function, e.g. a leaving do, or official school function;
- never take illegal drugs or any banned substance on school property;
- comply with the school's 'Access to Information Policy';
- comply with the school's 'No Smoking Policy'.

In performing your duties make sure that you do not display any of the following behaviours:

- aggressive behaviour, shouting or threatening, impolite or discourteous behaviour;
- unwelcome, sexual advances including touching, standing too close or circulating or displaying offensive material;
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
- ridiculing or demeaning someone or setting them up to fail;
- exclusion or victimisation;
- behaviour or decision-making which is based on improper prejudice;
- making unjustified, persistent criticisms;

- intimidating or undermining any member of staff whether they be in a senior or junior position;
- making threats or comments which are without foundation, about job security and intentionally blocking off promotion or training opportunities;
- making someone the butt of jokes.

Low level concerns

The school is committed to creating and embedding a culture of openness, trust and transparency amongst the school community. You are expected to promote an open and transparent culture in which concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

As set out in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), a low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with this code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work (as specified in the below examples); and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

You should ensure that your behaviour does not include, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on personal devices (refer to the Digital Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy for further details);
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- Or any such behaviour as identified within the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where you observe such behaviour(s) of an adult working in the school you must report it in line with your duty under KCSIE Part One. Refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.

In dealing with such instances, it is important that School Leaders rely on their professional judgement as safeguarding professionals and deal with low level concerns in a measured and proportionate way. Where reported concerns are cumulative over a period of time, School leaders may wish to seek advice from their HR provider in order to consider whether it is appropriate to manage the matter more formally in line with the school's Disciplinary and/or Local Authority safeguarding protocols.

Managing staff

For the school, the people it employs and the way they work are the key to its successes. The school wants its senior leaders to provide staff with sound leadership, clear direction, support which is appropriate to the employee's needs, and the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities to enable them to properly fulfil their role.

When supervising or managing staff, ensure that you:

- manage in accordance with the school's policies and procedures;
- set acceptable standards of conduct at work;
- Support and assist staff to carry out their work properly;
- do not:
    - act in an overbearing manner (i.e. using unwarranted excessive supervision);
    - wilfully neglect to supervise your employees properly;
    - misuse your power or position;
- avoid close personal familiarity with staff as this may give rise to improper conduct or the impression of improper misconduct (e.g. favouritism etc.) and damage the working relationship;
- consider the training and development needs of your staff to enable them to meet the current and future school needs;
- deal with staff fairly and consistently, and in accordance with the principles of equality of opportunity;
- accept responsibility for the work you and your staff do;
- provide for all your staff a working environment that is free from any form of discrimination, unfair treatment, bullying or harassment;
- are alert to and correct unacceptable behaviour;
- raise any concerns in a private and confidential place wherever possible;
- ensure staff can seek advice when raising harassment problems;
- take all complaints seriously and thoroughly investigate them;
- where appropriate report unacceptable behaviour to senior management;
- deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly and confidentially.

Respecting your colleagues, pupils and parents and carers

When dealing with your colleagues, pupils, parents and carers make sure that:

- you set a good example by treating all your colleagues, pupils and parents and carers with politeness, courtesy, respect, fairness, consistency and confidentiality (however, confidentiality will only be maintained where this does not impact on the school's vicarious liability);
- you never make remarks that are ageist, homophobic, racist, sexist, belittling of a person's religion, offensive to the disabled or otherwise improper and/or disrespects/infringes their human right choices;
- you do not harass, bully or discriminate against any colleague. The school treats very seriously complaints of harassment or bullying, or discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or age;
- you are polite, responsive, helpful and professional.

Working honestly

We expect you to use public money and resources with complete honesty and be able to demonstrate that at all times.

Ensure that you:

- avoid corruption and the suspicion of it;
- do not ask for or accept bribes of any sort;
- never seek or take any reward or favour for providing services apart from your pay;
- do not take a reward from anyone who has, or might have a business relationship with the school, or anyone who stands to lose or gain from a school decision;
- do nothing that could be seen as likely to improperly influence your work, your decisions or your impartiality;
- comply with the school's policy on gifts and hospitality;
- tactfully refuse any gifts of more than token value from an organisation or individual with which the school does, or may do business;
- do not accept hospitality exceeding a minimum level of common courtesy from an organisation or individual with which the school does, or may do business, other than in accordance with the school's policy on gifts and hospitality;
- record any offers of gifts and hospitality in the School's Gifts and Hospitality Register;
- do not use improper influence to get people you meet through your work to leave you things in their will;
- report to your manager if people you meet through work leave you things in their will;
- never obtain school property or money when you are not lawfully entitled to it (this includes subletting school or council property without approval);
- do not fraudulently claim housing benefit, or any other benefit from the council, or any administered by the Department of Work and Pensions or Inland Revenue;
- do not commit fraud or theft against any organisation or individual, including when claiming housing benefit or income support;
- do not falsify documents to claim pay including a bonus, overtime or sick pay;
- do not make personal use of school property, facilities or equipment unless you are properly authorised to do so;
- do not engage in private work where this may impact on your role with the School i.e. business or an appointment outside the school (paid or unpaid). If you have any doubt you should discuss any private work and its potential impact on the school with your line manager or Head Teacher. – also see below section Working with integrity
- never do private work when you should be working for the school or are on sick leave (consent will not be unreasonably withheld);
- never abuse your own position with the school to benefit yourself, your family, your friends or any outside organisation or political party.

Working with integrity

We expect you to do whatever is needed to protect your own reputation and standing with the public and to build respect for the school. There should be no reason to suspect that any of us are seeking opportunities for private gain. The relationships that the school has with its partners, contractors, consultants, community groups, suppliers and others must be responsibly managed so as to ensure there can be no suspicion of corruption or dishonesty with public money.

Ensure that you:

- do nothing away from work, which might damage public confidence in the school, or make you unsuitable for the work you do;
- never, without good cause, wilfully withhold any payments you owe to the school/council such as rent or council tax, or salary/wages overpayment;
- be fair and impartial in dealing with all parents, competitors, suppliers, contractors and sub contractors;
- complete a declaration of your financial and other interests e.g. engaged in private work (paid or unpaid);
- inform your head teacher if you have links with a firm or organisation, which may get money, grant awards, contracts or work from the school;
- inform your head teacher if you have a relationship with someone, which might appear to improperly influence a decision one might make about the other in connection with the work of the school. This includes things like being someone's landlord, being in debt to someone, or having a close personal relationship with a governor, council member, parent or carer or employee where this might lead to a conflict of interest;
- never use your work to further the aims of any group whose ideas are in conflict with the school's values and policies;
- inform your manager if you are charged with/ convicted of a crime, receive a police caution/reprimand or warning;
- Inform your manager if you are arrested for an offence which may be considered relevant to the work you do School leaders may wish to seek advice from their HR provider in such circumstances.

Working with sensitive information

We expect you to use sensitive information properly and to have due respect for any confidentiality and the integrity and availability of information generally. The school is required to make appropriate information available to governors, council members, internal and external auditors, government departments, parents and carers and the general public. Information you gather while working for the school should not be used for commercial or personal gain or be otherwise misused.

Ensure that you:

- know what information, to which you have access, the school treats as sensitive. The information may be marked to inform you of this, or you will be briefed appropriately. If you are unsure then seek clarification from your manager;
- know who else is entitled to have access to information that you have access to
- do not discuss sensitive information in public places, and never gossip about or misuse sensitive information;
- protect information when it is in your care. This includes when you are in possession of information away from school buildings;
- are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on pupils, parents and carers, staff and others;
- never create or amend information records or other information whether held on paper record or on computer system which relates to yourself, your family, relatives or friends without prior authorisation from your manager;
- use personal information held on computer in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act.

Working within the law

The school expects you to work within the law. A framework of laws and regulations set school powers. In order for its decisions and actions to be held to be reasonable in law, the school must carry out its business in a way that is within its powers, and is rational, proper and fair. Unlawful or criminal behaviour at, or even away from work, may result in a loss of trust and confidence in the employee, or the school.

Ensure that you:

- uphold the law at work;
- comply with the school's standards and the rules set out in the school's constitution.

Using Social Media (for example Facebook, Twitter)

Individuals employed by the school are entitled to use whatever system they like outside of their working time and working persona, to engage in the social aspects of the media – both broadcasting and receiving. However great care should be taken to ensure the private/work line is not crossed. It is good practice not to mention work, your opinions of your colleagues or processes and projects on your own private or public social media networks. Where the school's behaviour policy/code of conduct explicitly prevents mentioning work/opinions of colleagues/processes/projects within private or public social media networks, this should be observed.

You must be aware that posting information about the School and or Council cannot be isolated from your working life. Any information published online can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see. Staff should regard private social media with privacy settings as potentially public (i.e. viewed and shared to third parties). Regardless of whether the employee has identified themselves as school employees or not, anything they publish either school related, or another matter which may bring the School into disrepute, or call into question their suitability to work at the School, could result in dismissal. Where it is brought to their attention, employees should ensure they remove comments that are damaging to the school where these comments are made on their own social media accounts.

It is generally unacceptable and inappropriate for school staff to have contact with pupils on social media sites.

Any inappropriate comments postings or correspondence with pupils, parents, carers or other members of staff could lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Refer to the school's Digital/Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy for Schools for further details.

Working with the media

The school expects staff to promote the work of the school and to act as ambassadors. Relations with the media require specific skills and expertise and staff should not discuss school business with the press without prior permission.

Ensure that in relation to your school you:

- refer appropriate enquiries from the press to the Head Teacher;
- seek advice from the Head Teacher and get permission from your manager before you speak to, write to, or give interviews to the media;
- never bring the school into disrepute by publicising material, which is confidential, or against the interests of the school, or criticises its employees;
- do not bring the school's name into disrepute in any other way through the press or media.

It is acknowledged that Trade Union representatives will on occasion give interviews to the media on relevant subjects.

Applying for a job in Brent

The School is committed to a fair and open approach to recruitment and selection. Appointments are made without bias and on the basis of the candidate's ability and suitability for the job.

As an interview candidate you must make sure that you:

- are open and honest when completing the application form and at interview;
- disclose any criminal offence you have been convicted of (unless it is spent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1978);
- disclose any criminal charges you face, which, if convicted would make you unfit for your job;
- disclose if you are a friend or relative of (or have other links with) a governor or an officer who may appear to be in a position to influence your appointment;
- disclose if you are the tenant or landlord of someone who may influence your appointment, or if you have any other personal, financial or business relationship with them.