

# Staff & Volunteers Code of Conduct



## ST CLARE

Catholic Multi Academy Trust

**Adopted by Trust Board;**

May 2025

**Next review;**

By 31<sup>st</sup> July 2028

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*“To educate is an act of hope, one that calls for cooperation in turning barren and paralyzing indifference into another way of thinking that recognises our interdependence”*

Pope Francis

Our mission as Catholic schools is to build communities where every child is loved, nurtured and helped to reach their God given potential. Our schools are also called to be places where each member of staff is able to flourish sharing our gifts and talents to make our unique contribution to that mission.

We also recognise our public responsibility & duty as people charged with the care of children and with influence over them. We recognise too that we are charged with the stewardship of public money.

This code of conduct sets out the responsibilities for every member of staff to ensure that we meet our public duty with integrity and live up to the ambition we have for our Catholic school communities, as great places to learn and great places to work.

## 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

All school staff have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all staff, governors and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

In addition and in line with this code, all teachers are expected to act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#).

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

We are required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#).

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

### 3. General obligations

In line with St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust Articles of Association and the Catholic Education Services contract of employment, staff are:

- expected to play their full part in achieving the aims mission of St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust (the Trust) and the school.
- required to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Trust and the school.
- to have regard to the Catholic/Christian\* character of the Trust and the school and not to do anything in any way detrimental that character.

\*We recognise that there are two joint designation Catholic and Church of England schools in our Trust and we therefore commit to uphold the character of both traditions in the Trust and in those schools.

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Engage with induction, training and professional development and seek help when required to ensure that they understand and adhere to the statutory frameworks they must act within, which for teachers include the [Teachers' Standards](#)

### 4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in school. See appendix 3 on page 12 for details of how to access these. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

#### 4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

## 4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy (see appendix 3 for details of where this can be found)

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

## 4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the head teacher or to any member of staff set out in appendix 3. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair or vice chair of the board of directors.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

Please see appendix 3 for details of where to access the whistleblowing policy and who to contact if you have a concern.

## 5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so. Staff are also reminded of the need to observe appropriate boundaries with former pupils, particularly those who are still of school age or have recently finished school.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff\*, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Staff who have members of their family who are pupils at school should refer to the Appendix to this policy which provides guidance on how to apply the code of conduct.

## 6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Where staff have family members who are pupils in school, care should be taken to maintain boundaries between family communication and contact with other pupils or their families. Please see

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's online safety policy.

## 7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Our standard expectation is that staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours (outside of staff breaks) or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We recognise that there may be exceptions to this expectation, for example where personal devices are used for professional reasons (such as two factor authentication for professional accounts), These exceptions to standard expectations must be agreed in advance by the Headteacher or managers with delegated authority. We recognise too that there will be exceptional reasons to take a personal phone, such as related to a medical or other family emergency. Again, we expect staff to make best efforts to seek prior approval from a line manager if they believe they may need for exceptional use of personal devices.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## 8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Maintaining confidentiality also extends to the responsibility of staff to data protection and cyber security. Staff should be mindful to protect and keep safe sensitive information in digital or hard copy form.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy. The requirement for confidentiality also does not overrule the public duty to report concerns about harm or risk of harm to adults (e.g. staff members, family members, etc), but again this should always and only be through the appropriate channels.

## 9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

Supportive and professional relationships between colleagues are key to the strength of the school. Care should always be taken not to undermine a member of staff with students, parents or colleagues through careless remarks.

Any concern about the conduct of a colleague, or any disagreement, should be addressed professionally through dialogue, or if necessary, through reference to a senior colleague.

## **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional manner, appropriate to their role in school and the activities that they are engaged in.

Staff will not display any offensive or political slogans (e.g. on clothing, badges, tattoos, etc).

## **11. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, Diocese or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

## **12. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Trust Board and local adaptations and appendices for individual school use will be approved by Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Our Trust Board will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively, and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

## **13. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Equality Duty
- Data protection and cyber security



## **A Summary Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers**

This summary is to be read in conjunction with the full Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

We aim to:	We do this by:
<p>Treat all members of our community with respect.</p> <p>Foster relationships, which will develop the work of the school and benefit all members of the community.</p> <p>Value the work of others</p> <p>Play our part in reaching school aims/targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preserving the Catholic character of the school</li><li>• Not acting in any way that is detrimental and/or prejudicial to the interests of Catholic education</li><li>• Remembering that in our respective roles we serve the local community as a set of professionals</li><li>• Appreciating the roles and responsibilities of all</li><li>• Being positive</li><li>• Not shouting and seeking to listen</li><li>• Remaining calm in times of adversity</li><li>• Being open and honest</li><li>• Respecting the views and opinions of others</li><li>• Using polite and appropriate language</li><li>• Challenging our own thoughts and ideas</li><li>• Trying to see situations from the perspective of others, child or adult</li><li>• Contributing to meetings and discussions appropriately</li><li>• Set a good example in terms of dress by dressing appropriately, e.g. no jeans to be worn, sportswear can only be worn on class PE days or for particular sports-related events</li><li>• Following school procedures and policies</li><li>• Seeking to support others as they develop policy or aspects of the school</li></ul>

### **Behaviour that will not be tolerated**

- Discussions about pupils, their families, or colleagues that take place in public including in corridors, in the staffroom, and on the playground
- Using offensive language
- Sending abusive or threatening communications
- Defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments regarding the school or any member of the school community on Facebook or other social media including WhatsApp
- Words and deeds that might bring the school into disrepute or might undermine colleagues in the perception of others
- Physical or verbal aggression/intimidation towards any member of the school community
- Wilful disregard of school policies and procedures
- Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions given by a member of staff with a supervisory responsibility
- Acting in a manner that could reasonably be regarded as rude, impolite, contemptuous, or lacking appropriate professional demeanour

I have read and understood the Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct and the summary guidance above.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_ Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

### Guidance for staff who have family members who are pupils in the school

We recognise that being related to a pupil in school can create situations that make the code of conduct more difficult to apply. A common-sense approach is needed, in order to enable staff members to maintain professional conduct and so that their family members who are pupils have a good experience in school. The following guidance is set out to help with this.

#### Principle to apply

The main principle to apply is to ensure that professionalism and appropriate boundaries are maintained with pupils and their families.

#### Transparency and seeking help

To help with this it is sensible to discuss in advance with the Head and/or DSL common sense steps that you will take to maintain professional boundaries in your work.

If you are concerned about maintaining those boundaries in any particular situation, you should seek guidance and support from your Head and/or DSL.

#### Social Media and Communications

The standard expectation is that staff members do not contact pupils on social media or through their own personal devices (e.g. phone). This does not apply where a pupil is related to a member of staff, but care must be taken to maintain the same principles:

- Think about how you will separate your professional and personal contact with any pupil who is a family member.
- In a similar way be mindful of contact you might have outside of school with friends of your family member who are also pupils at school, again thinking about how to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with those pupils.
- Be careful with social media contact with a pupil who is a family member as their accounts may be linked to friends who are also pupils at school. Consider privacy settings and accounts which you may keep separate for family use.

As noted above, if in doubt, speak to your DSL or Headteacher.

#### Confidentiality and professionalism

- Pupils who are family members of staff should not be in staff work areas to ensure confidentiality is maintained, specifically in relation to documentation, phone calls, interactions with parents/carers, etc.
- Staff should not manage sensitive matters (e.g. serious behavioural or safeguarding issues, or financial issues) involving pupils who are family members.

## Appendix

### Application of the code of conduct to [Name of School]

The Trust code of conduct applies to all members of staff across the Trust. This appendix sets out arrangements or practices which are specific to the way we apply the code of conduct in our school.

Our Safeguarding Policy can be found at	<a href="http://www.stclarecmat.org.uk">www.stclarecmat.org.uk</a>
Our Safeguarding Lead and Deputies are	Adnan Bashir  Steve Davies
Our Whistleblowing Policy can be found at	<a href="http://www.stclarecmat.org.uk">www.stclarecmat.org.uk</a>
Contact details of people who can be contacted if I wish to raise a concern under the Whistleblowing policy	Adnan Bashir  <a href="mailto:abashir@stclarecmat.org.uk">abashir@stclarecmat.org.uk</a>