

Code of Conduct Policy

Great Ponton CE Primary School



Approved by:

Date: 11/11/2024

Last reviewed on:

September 2024

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September 2026

Policy overview

This Code of Conduct applies to both paid or unpaid members of staff, governors, trainee teachers, volunteers and all who work in school. Every reference to members of staff includes all above mentioned categories.

The code of conduct sets out the standards we expect from our members of staff and all categories mentioned above.

The code is not exhaustive in defining standards of conduct. Members of staff must behave in a manner in line with our values and must follow our policies, procedures and processes.

If a member of staff requires clarification or is unsure about conduct expectations, they must ask the headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Principles

This code applies to all the people who work in Great Ponton Church of England Primary School. All new members of staff will be made aware of this Code of Conduct as part of their induction.

The School and its governors may take disciplinary action if a member of staff fails to comply with the code and associated policies.

Honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity

These must be the principles for all members of staff to perform their duties.

Parents, carers and our wider community have the right to expect the highest levels of integrity and responsibility from all members of staff.

Political neutrality

Members of staff must not allow their personal political opinions to interfere with their work.

Members of staff cannot stand as a county councillor if employed by a community and voluntary controlled primary, secondary or special schools with delegated budgets

Provided any resultant conflict of interest is declared, school employees are eligible to stand for office as:

- a member of parliament
- a member of a county, district, borough or parish council

Member of staff in a position of trust

All members of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately if they are subject to a:

- criminal conviction
- caution
- ban
- police enquiry
- pending prosecution

It is essential in helping to safeguard the safety of children and vulnerable adults. It is a requirement as part of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process.

Accountability

All members of staff are accountable for their actions. They are required to comply with legislation, terms and conditions of employment, service and all other written guidelines.

Equality

We expect all members of staff to ensure equality in all aspects of their work and behaviour. This is fundamental to the running of our school and effective working relationships

All members of the public, parents and carers and everyone we have dealing with have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

Members of staff must comply with the law and our policies relating to:

- equality
- diversity and inclusion
- equal opportunities

All members of staff should strive to ensure that they do not discriminate against anybody, whether a pupil, parent, carer or member of our community.

We will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour, including harassment. The [disciplinary procedure](#) will be applied and members of staff may be subject to criminal proceedings.

Health and safety

Members of staff must not act in a manner liable to place themselves or anyone else at risk.

Standards of dress and appearance

A member of staff's standard of dress and personal adornment must be appropriate to their work. Inappropriate dress can create the view that we are inefficient or create offence. It can be interpreted as disrespectful by the public and members of our community.

We value and welcome the diversity of our workforce. We will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity.

We understand that members of staff might have tattoos, and this is their right. However, when in school and on school business we request that inappropriate tattoos are covered. Examples of inappropriate tattoos includes; images of naked or undressed people, inappropriate images or images supporting extreme political views.

Any jewellery worn should be discreet, appropriate, and not cause offence or be a health and safety hazard. Small earrings are permissible. A 'tunnel' or 'plug' if worn must be as close to natural skin tone for the individual and will count as the equivalent of one pair of earrings. In addition one discreet nose, tongue, ear or facial piercing is permitted and must not present a health and safety risk

Safeguarding

All members of staff need to be aware of the possible abuse of children and vulnerable adults. If a member of staff has concerns, they must follow the safeguarding policy. We all have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the children in our care. All members of staff are expected to undertake the safeguarding appropriate to their role.

Terms and conditions of employment and of service

All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of and understand all the conditions of their employment and the policies applying in our school that apply to their work. This includes all local policies, which take into account all legislation and the local and national schemes. Members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the latest versions of these policies and conditions.

Social media

Members of staff must ensure that they are aware of and follow the advice and guidance about using social media. Details are in the social media policy. We respect a member of staff's private life but must ensure that confidentiality and our reputation are protected.

When using social networking websites in your private life, a member of staff must not:

- promote yourself as working for us in a way which may bring us into disrepute
- identify other members of staff without their consent

- make any defamatory remarks about our school or anyone else (individual or organisation) that our school deals with
- conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to us
- disclose personal data or information or images that could breach data protection legislation about our school or the people and organisations we deal with
- promote or support the work of a business or businesses

Our social media policies apply to:

- all members of staff
- a member of staff's personal use of social media where it could have a negative impact on our reputation

Members of staff are also required to comply with IT and email policies.

Local and professional requirements

Where you are a member of a professional institute or association, you are obliged to comply with any of their professional code and standards of practice.

Respect for others

Members of staff must:

- treat others with respect
- not discriminate unlawfully against any person

Harassment and bullying

The working environment is one where all its members of staff are treated with dignity and respect.

We expect members of staff to act as role models for the organisation. Members of staff should proactively challenge behaviour and actions that may adversely affect health and wellbeing.

Contractors

All relationships of a business or private nature with all external organisations and individuals we deal with must be made known to the head teacher or chair of governors.

We must award orders and contracts on merit in fair competition with other tenders. We must not discriminate against or show special favours to any part of the local community.

Financial

A member of staff must advise the headteacher or Chair of governors as appropriate, in writing, if they find they have a financial or other interest in a contract which has or could be entered into by us.

Stewardship

All members of staff must:

- use any public funds entrusted to or handled by them responsibly and lawfully
- not make personal use of our property or facilities unless properly authorised to do so

Financial management

We acknowledge the responsibility we have for the administration of the funds entrusted to us to run our school.

We emphasise both to the public and members of staff the importance we place upon probity, financial control and honest administration. We will keep our arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption under constant review. We will pursue all suspected irregularities and take appropriate action.

Where a member of staff has direct responsibility for financial transactions, they must comply with the Finance Policy and/or the Procurement Card Policy, where appropriate, for example, when ordering goods and services for use by the school.

If we find that a member of staff has committed any act of fraud or theft, we will regard this as gross misconduct. They may face dismissal. We may involve the police to decide whether to instigate a criminal investigation.

Care and use of our resources

Members of staff must treat all our equipment with due care and respect.

They may not use our resources for anything other than for proper use in and for the school's work. If a member of staff wishes to use our equipment for other business, they must have permission from the head teacher or Chair of Governors, as appropriate.

Email

Misuse and time-wasting on email are unacceptable. Personal messages using official work email accounts must be kept to a minimum. Members of staff must not use official work email accounts to undertake personal business for monetary gain.

We do not condone the sending of defamatory email messages. If a member of staff does this, they will be subject to our disciplinary policy.

The tone and content of all messages must be appropriate.

Personal use of the internet, including social media, is permitted provided that you comply with:

- internet and intranet policy contained in the corporate information security policy
- social media policy

There will be no access to sites which have a terrorist, offensive, sexual or game playing or gambling content. We monitor access to the internet regularly. Anyone found accessing or attempting to access such sites will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Personal interests

In their official or personal capacity, member of staffs must not:

- allow personal interests to conflict with the requirements of our school and its community
- misuse their position to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or organisation

Members of staff are required to declare an interest if they have a connection or potential connection with any business or organisation which deals with us. This includes voluntary bodies.

A member of staff's life away from work is their personal concern. A member of staff must not subordinate their work to their private interests.

A member of staff should not put themselves in a position where their job, or our interests and their own personal interests conflict. This includes behaviour that could undermine our confidence or trust in them or the trust of others in us.

Members of staff must notify the headteacher or Chair of governors without delay of any criminal investigation, charge or caution. This does not include minor driving offences if their job does not include the use of a car.

These rules apply for charges incurred within or outside the course of your employment.

Additional employment

We will not prevent a member of staff from undertaking additional employment providing it does not:

- conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in us
- in any way affect the performance of their duties and responsibilities whilst at work or

- where their current position could confer an advantage to their private interest or personal gain

If there is a conflict, the member of staff's manager can ask them to discontinue conflicting private business interests.

Members of staff are required to obtain prior consent from the head teacher or Chair of Governors, if they wish to take up any additional employment.

This is important if they:-

- may exceed an average of 48 hours work per week in total, or
- which could have a detrimental effect on the member of staff's health and safety

We will not unreasonably withhold this consent.

Alcohol and drugs

The prevention of alcohol and drug misuse policy aims to ensure that members of staff report fit for work and to perform their duties.

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on our premises unless specifically approved by the Headteacher. We prohibit the use, possession, distribution or sale of drugs at the workplace, or when on school activities off site.

Conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality

Registration of interests

A member of staff must register any interest they, their spouse or partner have, which may conflict with the interests of the school. This includes any employment, substantial shareholding or membership of any external company or voluntary organisation which has or may enter into a contract with us

To register an interest contact the school office who will make the necessary arrangements. The register of interests will be held centrally in the office and regularly inspected by the Board of Governors.

Those who let contracts, or work to engage or supervise others, must inform the headteacher or Chair of Governors if either they, or a relative or friend has any personal interest in respect of one of the organisations with which we deal.

That interest may be through:

- employment
- substantial shareholding
- membership of the contracting company or body

The head teacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate will take steps to address any potential problems arising from the conflict of interests.

A 'relative' means a spouse, partner, civil partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, cousin, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons. Partner means a member of a couple who live together.

A 'friend' is someone well known to another and regarded with liking, affection and loyalty by that person. A closer relationship is implied here rather than mere acquaintance.

The requirement to enter an interest on to a register relates only to the member of staff's interests, or those of their spouse or partner. The need to declare an interest during the course of employment is much broader. It relates both to the member of staff's interests and those of their friends or relatives. A member of staff can only make a declaration of interest they know about. The requirement does not imply any obligation to make enquiries of friends and relatives as to the interests they hold.

A member of staff is required to declare an interest if it comes to their attention that they have a connection or potential connection with any business or organisation (including voluntary bodies) which deals with us.

The same principles apply to work carried out through partnerships. Care is needed to ensure that members of staff identify, declare and address potential conflicts of interest appropriately.

If in doubt, members of staff must register and declare an interest.

Gifts and hospitality

Members of staff should refuse personal gifts and hospitality offered to them or members of their family subject to the following:

- gifts and hospitality of 'token value' may be acceptable. For example, a pen, small gift, diary or a modest lunch, provided it is not a regular practice
- where the acceptance of refreshments or a meal would be appropriate in the conduct of regular business

Members of staff must treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing or seeking to do business with us or maybe applying to us for planning permission or some other kind of decision.

Members of staff must not compromise their position by accepting gifts or hospitality. Member of staffs might be, or might be thought by others, to have been influenced in making an important decision as a consequence.

Gifts

When deciding whether or not to accept an offer of a gift, the context is vital. It is unlikely that an offer from a company seeking to do business with us made to anyone involved in letting a contract will be acceptable. This is regardless of the value of the

gift. Member of staffs must never accept monetary gifts of any kind, whether in the form of cash, or cheques, vouchers or coupons.

Hospitality

Examples of hospitality which can be accepted are:

- refreshments or a meal given during or after business
- invitation to a society or institute dinner

Examples of hospitality which are not acceptable are:

- a holiday or business trip paid for by business contacts
- use of a company flat or hotel suite

Members of staff should decline offers from companies of promotional sales. Members of staff must inform the headteacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate, who will then decide the course of action to follow. They can write to the company concerned, indicating that improved discounts are the only form of promotion acceptable to us.

Members of staff must not use their own, relatives' or friends' loyalty cards when making purchases on behalf of the school or the children in our care.

Registration of gifts and hospitality

Members of staff must record all offers of gifts or hospitality, whether or not they are accepted. It is acceptable for this to be written as a list, identifying the gift, date received and who from. The list is to be signed and dated by the staff member submitting. There is no requirement to record receipt of promotional material of token value.

Sometimes the reasons for acceptance of a gift or hospitality cannot be expressed in a simple form of words. The reasons should be recorded separately and cross-referenced to the register.

- Members of staff must always record the reason for accepting any gift worth over £50. A manager may agree to accept the gift on the basis that a group of members of staff share it. Where appropriate, it can be used as a raffle prize or for a fund-raising event to benefit the school or community. A series of gifts which altogether total more than £50 in value must be registered.
- Members of staff must take care if purchasing goods or services on behalf of the school. If there is an offer of a gift or hospitality, they must record it. This applies whether or not it is to be accepted. Where it is to be accepted, approval should be obtained, from the headteacher or Chair of Governors.
- Any prizes won whilst on our business or while using our funds must be reported immediately to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. They will decide on the acceptability of such a prize.
- Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor a school activity, the rules concerning the acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.

- Members of staff should treat all offers of free hotel accommodation or tickets for concerts or sporting events with caution. These are usually of a value more than £50, and you must seek approval to accept such hospitality.

If there is any doubt, members of staff must decline any offer of hospitality. Also, member of staffs must enter any prizes won by them at a hospitality event in the register as a separate item.

If a member of staff is concerned about a particular gift or offer of hospitality, they must obtain advice from the headteacher or Chair of Governors.

Reporting procedures

A member of our staff must not treat another member of staff less favourably than any other.

It is a breach of their terms and conditions of employment and our policies if they victimise another member of staff who has used our reporting procedures to report the misconduct of others.

The whistleblowing policy intends to encourage and enable anybody who works for us, or on our behalf, to raise serious concerns and to make it clear that reporting can happen without fear of reprisal.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 protect members of staff who raise any concerns.

Fraud

Fraud is a deliberate deception to gain a personal advantage. The effects of fraud or corrupt activities can have a severe negative impact on everyone. These actions have no place within an ethical organisation.

Fraud includes:

- deception
- bribery
- forgery
- extortion
- corruption
- theft
- conspiracy
- embezzlement
- misappropriation
- false representation
- concealment of material facts
- collusion

A member of our staff must not undertake or assist in fraud, whether intentional or not. Breach of this policy could result in disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Openness

Without consent or unless required by law, a member of staff must not:

- disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone
- disclose information acquired which they believe is confidential
 - without the consent of a person authorised to give it
 - unless they are required by law to do so
- prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law

Use of information and confidentiality

All staff members must ensure they follow the schools GDPR policy when sharing information, which can be requested from the Headteacher. The reference to sharing information also includes electronic.

The school designated GDPR contact is Joe Lee;

joe.lee@ark.me.uk

Members of staff are required to understand and comply with information governance requirements.

A member of staff may work in areas other than their normal office or in premises shared with members of staff working in other services. If they view, overhear or otherwise come into contact with confidential information, they must maintain the privacy of this at all times. An exception can be if you are expressly authorised to divulge it, or are required to do so by law for example to:

- members
- auditors
- government departments
- service users
- the public

Members of staff must use their discretion on where to hold conversations of a confidential nature and be vigilant with information.

Members of staff have a duty of confidentiality.

Information concerning a member of staff's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside the school without their consent. This applies to anyone within the school community unless that person has authority or responsibility for such information.

Members of staff must never use their authority or position for personal gain. Members of staff must not enable colleagues or others to gain personally.

Media contacts

Members of staff are not permitted to make statements to the media or any other public statement which concerns our business unless they are:

- authorised by the Headteacher to act generally as a spokesperson
- expressly authorised to act as a spokesperson for a particular situation
- acting as an authorised trade union spokesperson

Members of staff are not permitted to make statements concerning the position of a member of staff.

If there is a media or press enquiry or other requests for a statement regarding a member of staff's position, they will be advised of this enquiry immediately by the headteacher.

If there are any other approaches from the media, the headteacher will discuss and agree on any future statements with the Chair of Governors.

Personal relationships

Members of staff must not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another member of staff, or prospective member of staff, who is a relative, partner or friend.

- 'Relative' means a spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons
- 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together
- 'Friend' means, someone well known to another and regarded with liking, affection and loyalty by that person. A closer relationship is implied here rather than mere acquaintance.

We recognise that members of staff who work together may form personal relationships, or may be related to one another. We do not wish to interfere with these personal relationships. However, it is necessary to ensure that members of staff behave appropriately and professionally at work.

The following principles apply to all members of staff regardless of their job or level of seniority:

- if a member of staff is involved in a personal relationship with a colleague, contractor, client, customer or supplier, they must not allow that relationship to influence conduct whilst at work. Intimate behaviour during work time is expressly prohibited. This rule applies during all working time, whether at the normal workplace or elsewhere on school business
- Managers and supervisors must declare any relationship with a member of staff whom they supervise, to a senior manager. To avoid a situation where a member

of staff has managerial authority over another with whom they are in a personal relationship with or are related, we may:

- elect to transfer one or both of the members of staff involved to a job in another team or service area, or
- transfer the member of staffs' reporting lines to other managers.
- In such a small school this will likely prove difficult so the need for this should be avoided if at all possible.

In these circumstances, we will consult with the members of staff. We will seek to reach an agreement regarding the transfer of one or both of them.

- If a member of staff embarks on a personal relationship with or is related to a colleague working in the same service area they must declare this to the headteacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate. This is in the interests of openness and transparency.
- If a member of staff begins a personal relationship with, or are related to, a client, customer, contractor or supplier which their job requires them to have authority over they must declare this to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. For example, if the member of staff has the authority to decide to whom to award contracts. We reserve the right to transfer or to alter the responsibilities of, the member of staff's role following consultation.
- If a member of staff is involved in appointments, they must make those appointments only based on merit. To avoid an accusation of bias, they must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to or have a personal relationship with an applicant.
- A member of staff must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any member of staff who is a relative, partner, or whom they have a personal relationship with.

Conduct outside of work

Members of staff must not engage in conduct outside of work which could damage:

- our reputation and standing
- a member of staff's reputation

Misconduct or criminal offences, which could bring the member of staff or us into disrepute, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Compliance with the code of conduct

Failure to comply

Failure to comply with any of the provisions included in the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken under the [disciplinary policy and procedure](#).

Failure to comply by a supply teacher, relief or casual, agency or freelance worker or contractor, may result in no further work being offered to the individual.

We reserve the right to take legal action against a member of staff where breaches of the code warrant such action.