Code of Conduct for School Staff
Victoria Park Nursery School
Model Code for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special and Maintained Schools

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1. Purpose

1.1. The conduct, behaviour and practice of all school staff will have an influence on the development of children and young people. This code provides clear guidance on what is acceptable conduct and what is not for staff working at the school.

1.2. The model Code of Conduct does not cover every eventuality.

2. Applicability

2.1. This procedure applies to all staff working in the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The head teacher and senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring all staff in the school are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct and for providing support and encouragement to ensure staff maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, accountability and openness.

3.2. All staff are responsible for reading and adhering to the Code of Conduct and for reflecting on their own conduct and practice and ensuring they meet the standards required of them.

3.3. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken. Serious breaches may result in dismissal from the school's employment.

Standards

The following standards apply to all school staff.

4. General Conduct

4.1. All employees are expected to apply the values of the school in their conduct at work, demonstrating honesty and integrity at all times. In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff. Any complaints about inappropriate conduct will be dealt with fairly and reasonably, using the agreed procedures.

4.2. All employees are expected to use their professional expertise and judgement to put the wellbeing, development and progress of pupils first, within the context of their role.

4.3. All individuals associated with the school have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. All employees are therefore expected to treat colleagues, pupils, parents, governors, schools partners, other bodies or agencies or members of the community with dignity and respect.

4.4. Employees should not use their position within the school for any purpose other than school business.

4.5. The school has an agreed procedure for the management of staff discipline. All employees should make themselves aware of this procedure and the disciplinary rules which apply in the school.

4.6. All employees are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. Where an employee breaks the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or has a direct effect on work, the employee may be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

4.7. Employees are required to adhere to all health and safety policies and practices (see Working Safely – section 18).

4.8. The school operates a no smoking policy and smoking is not allowed within the school or school grounds. (See Model Smoke Free Policy for Schools)

4.9. Staff must adhere to the school's [*the school should insert the titles of any other relevant policies e.g. social media, use of the internet, alcohol and substance misuse, restraint, etc.]*

4.10. Where an employee is taking prescribed drugs, he/she should inform his/her line manager where this may affect behaviour and/or performance at work.

4.11. It is good practice for employees to inform their line manager if they are suffering from a medical condition, or have personal circumstances, that may adversely affect performance at work.

5. Gifts and hospitality

5.1. Employees of the school may from time to time be offered gifts or hospitality, for example from students or parents. The following advice should guide decisions on receipt of such gifts/hospitality:

5.1.1. Small individual thank you gifts may be accepted. Gifts resulting from collections are exempt (e.g. weddings, baby showers & leaving presents).

5.1.2. Always refuse a gift/offer of hospitality if you suspect the giver is trying to gain or has an ulterior motive. Always be sensitive to the possibility the giver may think that even small gift/offer hospitality may elicit preferential treatment.

5.1.3. Never accept a gift/offer of hospitality from someone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the school, seeking employment with the school, or in any form of dispute with the school.

5.1.4. Occasional working lunches with providers or partners are generally acceptable provided they are not to an unreasonably level or cost and the provider or partner is not seeking to achieve an advantage.

5.1.5. Invitations to corporate hospitality events must be judged on their merit. It may be acceptable, for example, to attend cultural or sporting events or other public performances as a representative of the school. Consider the number of these events that are attended and what the

public perception may be if you were to attend, bearing in mind point 5.1.2.

5.1.6. Invitations to speak at corporate events, seminars or gatherings which have been made to you in your school capacity must be approved by your line manager/head teacher before acceptance.

5.1.7. If you are in any doubt about the acceptability of a gift/offer of hospitality, consult your line manager/head teacher.

6. Financial and personal interests

6.1. School staff must at all times be seen to be acting fairly and impartially and personal needs or interests, or those of family or friends, must not influence actions or decisions.

6.2. Where an employee has a friend, associate or relative who is providing goods or services to the school, of a kind that the employee deals with directly or monitors in the course of his/her work, this should be disclosed. Disclosures must be made in writing to the headteacher, who will advise any other school staff who may need to know.

6.3. Off-duty hours are generally the personal concern of the employee, though employees must not engage in any outside activity that may conflict with the interests of the school or could damage the confidence of the community in the school or the role of the employee.

6.4. Employees should register with the head teacher any membership of an organisation not open to the public that has secrecy about rules, membership and/or conduct (e.g. Freemasons).

7. Other employment

7.1. Members of the school management team must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment without the written consent of the head teacher. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.

7.2. Other employees may take up additional employment without consent providing the employment does not conflict with the interests of the school or in any way weaken the confidence of the community in the individual or school.

7.3. Where an employee undertakes additional employment he/she must notify his/her line manager of the number of hours he/she is working per week, to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations.

8. Confidentiality

8.1. Confidential information must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know. Paper-based and electronic information must be stored securely and confidentially with access limited to those who have a right to view it.

8.2. Employees must not disclose any information that is confidential or that, if it were made public, may lead to a breakdown in the trust and confidence the school is

required to provide to the community. It may be necessary to discuss confidential information with colleagues. Where this is the case, the discussions must take place in private. (Also see the model Whistleblowing Policy).

8.3. Employees must not disclose any information about the school/students to the press or other media unless expressly authorised to do so by the head teacher.

8.4. Employees must not disclose information about the school or its pupils on social networking sites or such similar sites. Employees should consider the information that they include on these sites and how the information may impact on the school and its reputation. Inappropriate disclosure of information may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. See the school's policy on Social Networking.

8.5. Employees should not put confidential or sensitive information on memory sticks which have not been encrypted to ensure confidential information can't be accessed should the stick be lost or misplaced.

9. Recruitment and Appointment

9.1. Employees involved in recruitment and appointment must apply the school's recruitment and selection processes and ensure fairness and equality is applied at all times.

9.2. Where an employee is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, he/she must advise his/her line manager or head teacher where he/she is closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g. close friend, relative).

9.3. Employees applying for a post or other work-related opportunity within the school (e.g. promotion, secondment) must not seek the help or influence of school governors.

10. Dress and Presentation

10.1. The school expects its employees to dress in a formal manner that creates a good and professional impression. Clothes should be modest, appropriate to the job, and meet health and safety requirements.

10.2. Personal protective equipment must be worn where required.

11. Safeguarding

11.1. All employees are responsible for following and adhering to the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.

11.2. All employees are expected to use the appropriate channels, as set out in the relevant procedures, to raise concerns about the practice of others if there is suspicion that their conduct has a negative impact on learning or causes harm to pupils.

11.3. Employees must inform the head teacher as soon as reasonably practicable if they are subject to a criminal investigation or have received a conviction, caution or have been banned from working with children.

12. Relationships with parents and carers

12.1. Employees should strive to establish productive relationships with parents and carers.

12.2. This includes providing parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress, involving parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education, considering parents and carer's views and perspectives and following the school policies on communication and involvement with parents and carers.

12.3. Where an interaction with a parent or carer becomes aggressive or offensive, the interaction should be ended politely and firmly, with assistance summoned where required. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any contact with parents/carers where aggression or violence is anticipated and the appropriate lone working procedures must be instigated.

13. Relationships with line manager

13.1. Employees and line managers should strive to maintain co-operative and effective working relationships. Relationships should be courteous, reasonable and fair at all times.

13.2. Employees should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions given by the line manager to the best of their ability.

13.3. Line managers should exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with school policies, contractual obligations and national standards.

13.4. Line managers should use the appropriate performance management frameworks to appraise the performance of direct reports and provide feedback. Line managers should provide honest, accurate and justifiable comments when providing feedback, and encourage staff to undertake training and development opportunities, within the context of the school needs and budget.

13.5. Line managers must ensure direct reports are aware of, and have access to, the relevant policies and procedures that affect their work.

14. Working with School Governors

14.1. When working with governors or dealing with enquiries from governors, all employees are expected to be courteous and efficient. Employees should expect similar levels of courtesy from governors.

14.2. Employees should use the appropriate school procedure (e.g. Grievance procedure) to deal with any work-related personal issues and should not engage governors in such issues unless it is in accordance with a relevant procedure.

14.3. Similarly, employees should not use governors to by-pass formal school procedures in any way, for example to influence the outcome of a disciplinary matter. This does not affect the rights of trade union representatives to take up matters on behalf of their members through appropriate channels, or for governors to be formally involved in Council procedures where appropriate – for example, acting as a member of a governor disciplinary appeal panel.

14.4. Employees must not try to influence governors prior to any appointment/decision. This excludes providing views to governors as part of an information-gathering or consultation exercise.

15. Working as part of a whole-school team

15.1. Employees should endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all school colleagues and to participate in whole-school development and improvement activities.

15.2. Employees should uphold all school policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the life or running of the school in an appropriate and responsible way.

15.3. Employees should recognise the important role of the school in the life of the community and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.

15.4. Employees should cooperate with other professionals in the children's workforce, establishing effective and productive relationships with other professional colleagues.

15.5. Employees should at all times ensure they act within their sphere of their own competence and responsibilities and seek clarification where this is needed.

16. Respect for diversity and promoting equality

16.1. All employees must act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background , age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, religion or belief.

16.2. Employees must take responsibility for understanding and complying with school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying.

16.3. Employees should help to create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.

16.4. Employees should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from their line manager or head teacher where issues are identified.

17. Working with money

17.1. Employees receiving or responsible for school money need to take particular care and must adhere to the appropriate financial procedures (FMSIS) at all times.

17.2. Employees submitting claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure must ensure the correct procedures are followed, the details of the claim are within set limits and can be substantiated (e.g. with receipts).

18. Using the school's resources and premises

18.1. School equipment should not be used for excessive personal use unless authorised by the head teacher. This includes photocopy facilities, stationery, telephones, computers and premises.

18.2. School ICT systems, particularly email and internet, should only be used for professional purposes. ICT passwords should be kept confidential at all times and not disclosed to any other individual.

19. Working Safely

19.1. Both the school and its employees are responsible for ensuring that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.

19.2. Actions or omissions of any individual that place others in danger may lead to disciplinary action.

19.3. Employees are expected to:

- Adhere to the school's health and safety policy and rules.
- Advise the head teacher/line manager/appropriate person of any unsafe situations or practices
- Take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of other employees, pupils and any other users of the school premises
- Wear any safety clothing/equipment and ensure all pupils are wearing and use appropriate equipment
- Report any injuries, accidents or near misses to the appropriate Responsible Person
- Report incidents of abusive/aggressive or bullying/threatening behaviour that is experienced or witnessed to the appropriate Responsible Person
- Advise line manager when taking any medication that could affect the ability to work safely
- Comply with hygiene requirements.

20. Protecting the School and its standards

20.1. Where an employee has reason to suspect that colleagues, senior managers or governors are acting improperly, the employee should report these suspicions to the headteacher (or the chair of governors if the suspicions concern the head teacher). The employee will be assured the concerns, when made in good faith, will be heard without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage in accordance with the confidential reporting code.

20.2. Improper conduct can cover a wide range, including financial irregularity, abuse of pupils, abuse of power or position, neglect of duty, discrimination, bullying or harassment in accordance with the Whistleblowing Procedure.

Appendix 1 – Teachers' Standards

Teachers are expected to comply with the standards of personal and professional conduct set out in the Teachers' Standards.

- A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
    - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
    - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
    - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
    - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
    - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.