

# The Spire Church of England Learning Trust

## Staff Code of Conduct Policy 2023 - 2024

This policy was revised/updated by:

Jan Perrey, Chief Operations Officer  
Ginnie Beale, Trust Safeguarding Lead

Reviewed: June 2023

Next review date: June 2024

\* Green highlights indicate sections that can be amended by LGBs in order to tailor the policy to the individual needs of the Trust's schools if there are no green highlights then this policy is a Trust Policy and cannot be amended.

In collaboration with



## INTRODUCTION

As an employer, the Trust is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all school employees. As a Church of England Trust, all adults in school are expected to actively follow and live out our mission statement:

### **Our mission**

To create outstanding organisations that promote educational excellence, system leadership, and cohesion. To be proud of what we stand for and our unapologetic commitment to the highest of expectations.

To create a Trust that seeks to collaborate with all schools across the MAT, to share good practice and to raise achievement. To promote educational excellence, with a core vision for teaching and learning at its heart which drives attainment and progress in the classroom. To support leaders at all levels so that they have the capability and drive to effectively manage change in an ever-shifting educational landscape.

### **Our vision**

**All learners grow, aim high and thrive in their ambitions so as to live life in all its fullness**

Our vision is wide ranging. It encompasses aspiration, educational excellence, system leadership, social mobility and cohesion.

### **We aim to:**

- Encourage and deliver holistic education, supporting children in their academic, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development.
- Provide more choice to parents by offering them the chance to send their children to an inspirational school
- Encourage academic excellence for all children from all backgrounds to help them succeed at the highest level and to have the opportunity to reach their full potential in every sense so that they are properly equipped for life ahead.
- Ensure ambition and high aspirations are rewarded through all our schools.
- To adopt a collegiate approach to developing communities of excellence, working in partnership with schools and other educational partners to design flexible models of working which fully utilise the expertise which exists within our schools, ensuring every child has access to a first-rate education that embodies opportunity for all.

Staff are also expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the Trust.

All teachers employed under the Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

## **1. PURPOSE**

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all Trust staff are expected to observe and the expectations therein. Trust staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the pupils within the Trust and individual schools. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Trust, whether inside or outside working hours.

## **2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

As an employee of this Trust, you should put the well-being, development and progress of children and young people first. You are in a very responsible position and can deeply influence children and young people through your actions, comments and behaviour. Therefore, it is imperative that you demonstrate the highest standards of conduct at all times.

## **3. TEACHERS STANDARDS**

The Trust expects that all teachers comply with the Teachers' Standards. These standards are a good benchmark for all staff, not just teachers, to set standards of their own behaviour by. All Staff should make the education of students their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers must act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up to date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their students.

This has to extend to your contact with all members of the community, including parents and outside visitors, as you are a representative of the Trust and the school you are based in. You must also familiarise yourself with, and adhere to other policies in place for the Trust and the individual school you are based in and in your particular role and you should comply with all reasonable requirements or instructions from the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO).

It is not appropriate when working within your role as an employee to oppose the stated aims and policies of the Trust and/or individual school or to undermine the performance of its duties and responsibilities. It is important for all employees to present a unified image to the public.

You should ensure that your relationships with your fellow employees are always conducted in a professional and courteous manner; you should not censure other colleagues or criticise their work within hearing of a pupil or parent.

It is not acceptable for you to publicly criticise or blame management, colleagues or the Trust through any medium including internet 'blogs', websites or social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter and you must be aware that the laws governing defamation, breach of copyright, etc. apply equally to 'blogging' as to other forms of

communications. Offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and may constitute a disciplinary or even a criminal offence, as could the disclosure of any confidential or personal information about the Trust, its staff, pupils or other members of the community.

Any disagreement involving the interpretation or application of the Code as it applies to you should be discussed with the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO). However, if you feel the Code is being applied unreasonably you may be able to seek redress through the Grievance Procedure.

#### **4. SAFEGUARDING FOR PUPILS**

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- 1) physical abuse
  - 2) sexual abuse
  - 3) emotional abuse
  - 4) neglect
- The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the individual schools or where unavailable one of the Deputy Designated Leads.
  - Staff are provided, on induction, with personal copies of the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy. Staff must be familiar with these documents, which can be found on the Trust or individual school's websites or from the Trust's HR Assistant, Emily Kolb and/or Operations Manager, Jan Perrey, based at St. John's CE Middle School, Bromsgrove.
  - Staff must take the upmost care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
  - All staff, need to follow the 'Teachers Standards' and 'demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct, treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position and having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions.

#### **5. SAFEGUARDING FOR STAFF**

It is important that staff avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of unprofessional conduct and adopt safe working practice. The following is taken from the Worcestershire Guidance 'Safe Working Practice for Staff in Education Settings.'

## Safe Working Practices

- staff should be careful not to misuse their power and influence over children
- staff should ensure their behaviour remains professional at all times, including their dress and use of language
- staff should not receive gifts, other than small tokens of appreciation
- staff should not give gifts, other than as part of an agreed reward system or given to all children equally
- staff should guard against any pupil forming an infatuation with them and report any such concerns to the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher (CEO).
- staff should not engage in personal email or telephone contact with pupils, including online messaging, text messaging, and social networking sites, etc.
- any out of school contact should be planned in advance and agreed with the Headteacher and parents
- home visits should be planned, paired and agreed with the Headteacher and any necessary risk management plans should be in place and adhered to
- only authorised areas of the curriculum should include any sexual or other sensitive material; staff should take advice from senior staff if there is any chance of misinterpretation
- internet use should be according to school policy and there should not be any access to inappropriate material or unauthorised images of children
- taking or recording of images of pupils should take place with regard to the law, school policy and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity and safety of pupils.

***Note: Staff must not use their mobile phone as a camera in school. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers or personal school IPADs.***

***Staff must ensure they have parental permission to take photos/videos of any pupil in school through use of the disclaimer form issued at the start of each academic year. \*note 1***

- communication with pupils should never be sexually suggestive; staff are in a position of trust and should never engage in any sexual relationship with pupils in or out of school.
- staff must report concerns about other staff behaviour in the interests of both staff and children involved following the whistleblowing policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- staff must keep to confidentiality protocols and discuss any information sharing issues with senior staff or the GDPO if in any doubt.

***( \*note 1 Currently at St Matthias, many staff use their own personal mobile devices as a means of communicating via ClassDojo between teachers and parents. Staff take photographs of class-based activities on their mobile phone and send it to the parent or post on a class or main page with parent's permission. Any photographs taken by the teacher in school MUST be appropriate and deleted off their own personal device as soon as it has been uploaded to ClassDojo. Over the course of the Autumn Term 2022 the use of ClassDojo on personal devices will be reviewed and school ipads allocated to each class teacher for the use of ClassDojo and photographing children's work to align with the Trust Mobile Phone policy.)***

## 6. PHOTO ID

All staff will be provided with and must wear photo identification at all times during working hours unless health and safety reasons do not permit this.

## 7. PHYSICAL CONTACT (to be read in conjunction with Positive Handling Policy)

All staff should be aware of what constitutes appropriate physical contact with pupils. Staff should only exercise physical restraint as a last resort to prevent injury. Where this is necessary, guidance in the Trust's Positive Handling Policy should be followed and record kept. Staff are allowed to comfort a child who is hurt or distressed **in a manner appropriate to the age of the child**. Staff should not initiate any physical contact unnecessarily and there should be clear boundaries.

- Staff should not hold children's hands
- Children should not be picked up (unless medically necessary)
- Children should not sit on adult's laps  
Children should be discouraged from hugging staff
- Staff should avoid being in a room alone with a child where the door is closed. If you need to talk to a child, either leave a door open and position yourself within sight of the door, or ask another member of staff to be present.
- If in a medical situation staff need to inspect an injury to a child below their clothes then another member of staff must also be present.
- Physical intervention should never be inappropriately used, should follow relevant procedures and be clearly recorded and reported.

## 8. CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF:

- You must report to the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher (CEO) any concern that indicates that a member of staff or a volunteer may be a risk to or may have acted inappropriately towards children.
- If the concern is about the Headteacher, Head of School/Senior Manager you must report it to the Executive Headteacher (CEO) or Chair of Governors or, in their absence a Governor Representative for Safeguarding or Trust Safeguarding Lead. In the absence of all of these concerns are directed to the Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education, Worcestershire County Council (LADO).
- If you feel unable to report the matter within school you must seek safeguarding advice from the Senior Adviser for Safeguarding.
- Record what you have noticed or what has been said and sign and date it. Within the Low-Level Concern Policy there is a dedicated form.

- You should follow the procedures in the Low-Levels Concern Policy or Allegations Policy and you have a responsibility to whistle-blow if all else fails. The school's whistleblowing policy can be found on the Trust's and individual schools websites or from Emily Kolb, Trust HR Assistant and/or Jan Perrey, Operations Manager based at St. John's CE Middle School, Bromsgrove.

## **9. FINANCIAL/PERSONAL INTERESTS**

- 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.
- 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/Head of School, who will advise any other school staff who may need to know.
- You must not be influenced by personal interests or those of relatives, friends or membership of external organisations or societies. There should be no grounds for suspicion that you are using your position within or knowledge of the Trust for personal gain or that you could be influenced by improper motives.

If you belong to outside organisations, including voluntary organisations, there must be no conflict with your job or other Trust interests.

- You should advise the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO) in writing about anything which could give this impression and complete a Register of Interests form held with the Company Secretary, Jan Perrey.
- For staff who have responsibility for placing orders and Trust/school expenditure, please refer to the Trust/schools Financial Procedures Policy.

## **10. RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT**

- Employees involved in recruitment and appointment must apply the Trust's Safer recruitment and selection processes and ensure fairness and equality is applied at all times.
- Where an employee is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, he/she must advise the Headteacher/Head of School where he/she is closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g. close friend, relative).

## **11. PRIVATE WORK**

- School premises, equipment, working time or other resources must not be used to undertake private work.
- The Trust/school needs to be aware if its employees undertake private work or voluntary activities in their own time to ensure that there is no conflict of interests with the Trust/school. You should be aware that outside work or activity, whether or not you receive payment, could reduce your ability to safely and effectively carry out your employment with the Trust/school, e.g. through tiredness, and would be considered unacceptable.
- You must not undertake private work when on sick leave without the express knowledge and prior written approval of the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO) and/or Governing Body and subject to appropriate medical advice.

## **12. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

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

- Small individual thank you gifts may be accepted. Gifts resulting from collections are exempt (e.g. weddings or leaving presents).
- 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 gifts/hospitality may elicit preferential treatment.
- 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.
- Occasional working lunches with providers or partners are generally acceptable provided they are not to an unreasonable level or cost and the provider or partner is not seeking to achieve an advantage.
- 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 Trust/school. Consider the number of these events that are attended and what the public perception may be if you were to attend.

- Invitations to speak at corporate events, seminars or gatherings which have been made to you in your Trust/school capacity must be approved by your Headteacher/Head of School before acceptance.
- If you are in any doubt about the acceptability of a gift/offer of hospitality, consult the School Business Manager or Headteacher/Head of School.

### **13. COPYRIGHT**

You should be aware that 'intellectual property' such as software, ideas, documents, etc. created during your employment belongs to the Trust/school. All files, materials, the media upon which they are located and all software programmes or packages which are utilised or developed solely for or in connection with your job remain the property of the Trust/school.

### **14. CONFIDENTIALITY**

If you have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, you must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

You must ensure that sensitive and/or confidential information is properly secured and safeguarded at all times especially if being transported in paper or electronic formats. Particular care must be taken with information stored on portable electronic media such as laptops and memory devices which are often targeted for theft.

Confidential Information which comes into your possession must not be used for personal benefit or divulged to other parties except in the proper course of duty, for example to other professionals working with the same child.

### **15. CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA**

Ensure that you have been given authorisation to have contact with the media from the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher (CEO).

### **16. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DATA PROTECTION**

You must familiarise yourself with the Trust's/schools ICT policies, including use of the internet. In particular, all use of the internet and email facilities must be authorised, legal, and appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of the Trust's/schools policies. Users shall not use the internet or email for the following:

- to fail to comply with existing Trust's/schools policy
- to compromise the integrity of any network or system
- to access, display or transmit any kind of sexually explicit material or any offensive or discriminatory material of any kind

- to download software
- to bet or gamble
- to disclose private or confidential information.

Employees should also be aware when they are using personal IT equipment for undertaking school related business that the same rules apply.

## **17. USE OF RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT (to be read in conjunction with the Online Safety Policy and Mobile Phone Policy)**

Facilities, equipment, vehicles, materials and other resources provided by the Trust/school for use in your work, either at school or at home, must not be used for any other purpose without permission or appropriate payment, e.g. photocopying, private telephone calls. Mobile telephones provided by the Trust are exclusively for business use and must not be used to make private calls.

## **18. FACEBOOK/SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS**

- It is not acceptable for you to publicly criticise or blame Trust/school management and colleagues through any social media including internet “blogs”, websites or social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter and you must be aware that the laws governing defamation, breach of copyright, etc. apply equally to “blogging” as to other forms of communications.
- Offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and may constitute a disciplinary and/or criminal offence, as could the disclosure/publication of any confidential or personal information about the Trust/school, its staff, pupils or other members of the school community.

## **19. OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

Any proposal to travel overseas on official business must be approved by the Governing Body before the travel takes place.

## **20. EQUALITY ISSUES**

The Equality Law Act 2010 covers age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. All members of the community, including pupils, families and other employees have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity. Please make yourself aware of and comply with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policies and procedures.

## **Respect for diversity and promoting equality:**

- All employees must act appropriately towards all children and young people, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.
- Employees must take responsibility for understanding and complying with Trust/school policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying.
- 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 underachievement.
- Employees should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from the Headteacher/Head of School where issues are identified.

## **21. DRESS CODE**

This policy applies to all employees of the Trust (permanent, fixed term and casual)

- It is a condition of employment that all staff comply with the Trust's dress code. Accordingly, all staff are expected to dress in a professional or business-like manner. Clothing needs to reflect the professional environment in which we work and maintain high standards of modesty, style and taste. Staff need to be mindful that although there is a difference in circumstances, students will always compare what staff are wearing with what they are prohibited from wearing. Staff need to be aware that they are regarded as role models and consistent standards of professional attire help set a purposeful and business-like manner.
- A useful comparator is the standard and type of dress that can be commonly seen worn by staff working in a professional office. Smart suits or separate jacket/trouser/skirt combinations are standard, with trousers being of full length and skirts not being immodestly short. Footwear should be smart and formal. Men are expected to wear tailored shirts with collar and ties done up (ties maybe omitted if men work in the Early Years Setting)
- Sometimes it will be impractical to change from PE kit to ordinary clothes therefore in these circumstances PE staff can teach in their PE kit. Where uniform or protective clothing is issued it must be worn as required when at work or representing the Trust/school. Teachers teaching primary aged children may wear "appropriate" clothing, after clearing this with the Headteacher/Head of School, depending upon the activity e.g. sitting on the floor, working in forest school etc.

Examples of clothing that are deemed **inappropriate**:

- Denim jeans or skirts/shorts (except on a dress down day or themed days)
- T-shirts with inappropriate logos
- Sweatshirts
- Provocative attire (i.e. thongs showing)
- Particularly short shorts/skirts/dresses
- Low cut or strappy tops
- Tops that display the midriff
- Flip flops (beach style) trainers
- Cargo trousers or track suits (unless involved in PE lessons)
- Leggings (unless underneath a long tunic style dress or skirt as an alternative to tights and they look smart)

The Policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff must use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy. If unsure please check with the Headteacher/Head of School.

The Trust values and recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements.

All staff will wear their issued ID badges.

Staff considered to be in breach of the dress code will be advised by their line manager and given the opportunity to conform. Disagreements about the appropriateness of specific items of clothing or footwear will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team, Headteacher, Head of School or Executive Headteacher(CEO) (as appropriate) who will be the final arbiter on such items.

Persistent failure to comply with this code may result in disciplinary action.

## **22. RELATIVES AND CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias you should endeavour not be directly involved in the appointment, promotion, discipline or other employment decision relating to another employee to whom you are related or with whom you have a close personal relationship.

If you work in close proximity with other employees or pupils to whom you are related or have a close personal connection you must maintain a strictly professional relationship at work.

## **23. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Unsafe working can endanger you, your colleagues and members of the public. You must familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety Policy and guidelines for your particular place of work. You must follow the rules, codes and safe practices they describe including reporting any accidents, incidents or near misses you have at work.

## **24. NO SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted on the school site.

## **25. ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

- The consumption of alcohol and drugs are forbidden on the Trust/school premises or in the Trust's vehicles.
- Employees must not take drugs, alcohol or any other substance before work, during a break or at lunch time that is capable of causing their behaviour, judgement or performance at work to be affected.
- It is equally inappropriate for those working in close proximity to children to have alcohol on their breath even though this may not amount to drunkenness.
- Alcohol on school residential visits is restricted to one drink with a meal and two designated members of staff must not consume any alcohol in case of any emergency.
- Consumption of alcohol is allowed at the Trusts/schools social events but at all times staff should remember their position in the Trust/school and not behave in any way that could undermine their professionalism. If a member of staff is representing the Trust/school at a business function outside of working hours alcohol should only be consumed in moderation.

## **26. CRIMINAL CHARGES, CAUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS**

You must tell the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO) immediately if you are charged with or cautioned or convicted of any criminal offence whilst you are an employee of the Trust/school. While such proceedings will not necessarily affect your employment, the Headteacher, Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher(CEO) needs to be sure there are no implications for the Trust/school, its reputation, safety of children or in relation to the role you undertake.

Any behaviour in breach of this Code by employees may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Governors/Board of Directors will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this Code.

Updated – June 2023

<b>Changes made:</b>	Reviewed by – Ginnie Beale, Trust Safeguarding Lead No other changes were made	June 2023
<b>Approved by:</b>	Trustees Board of Directors	<b>Date:</b> 11.07.2023
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	June 2023	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	June 2024	



## The Spire Church of England Learning Trust

# Code of Conduct for Employees

**School:** .....

I confirm that I have received and read the Staff Code of Conduct issued September 2023

Name.....(Please print)

Signed..... Date.....

Updated June 2023