



**Policy:** Code of Conduct

**Policy reference No:** 003

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**Person responsible for policy:** Stephen Dean, Chief Executive Officer

**Authorised by:** Board of Trustees

**Review date:** December 26

This policy applies to all schools within the Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust. Primary QuEST is a Church of England Trust which seeks to ensure all pupils flourish, together in a supportive and caring environment.

## **Flourishing together through LIFE**

### **Contents**

1. Aims, scope and principles .....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. General obligations .....	2
4. Safeguarding .....	2
5. Staff-pupil relationships .....	3
6. Communication and social media.....	4
7. Acceptable use of technology .....	4
8. Confidentiality.....	4
9. Honesty and integrity .....	4
10. Dress code .....	5
11. Conduct outside of work .....	5
12. Monitoring arrangements .....	5
13. Links with other policies.....	5
14. Summary.....	6
14. Biblical underpinning for Church of England schools .....	7

## **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.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

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

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, trustees, local advisors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

The Primary QuEST vision is:

*Flourishing together through LIFE*

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**

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

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **3. General obligations**

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
- › Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- › Adhere to 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 on the trust and school websites. New staff will also be given copies on arrival and form part of the induction process.

#### **4.1 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 harms 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 one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen
- Using inappropriate language

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. This is available on the trust and school websites.

### **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.

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 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.

## **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.

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 online e-safety policy

## **7. Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in 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.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system, staff also sign an acceptable use policy each year.

## **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

This does not overrule the 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.

## **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.

### **10. Dress code**

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

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

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, 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 by the CEO, on a biennial basis but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Primary QuEST Trust Board.

Our trustees 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 Code of Conduct should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the Professional Standards for Teachers and The Primary QuEST Trust's related policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Accessibility Policy and Plan
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

This policy is reviewed every two years by the Trust Board

## Summary

### Dress Code for Staff

We aim to look smart for work; staff are requested not to wear:

- Jeans, jeggings or shorts
- Low cut tops, tops that reveal midriff or tops that have large slogans on them

### Mobile phones

All staff are reminded that mobile phones should not be used during lesson time. Phones should be kept in the class cupboard/desk drawer/a locker and therefore out of sight of the children. Staff mobiles should not be used to take photographs or video the children.

When on a school trip/swimming at GL1/on a local walk, it may necessary for staff to have a mobile phone with them in case there is a need to contact the school.

### Staff Attendance

All staff members are expected to:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible
- Ensure PPA time is normally taken in school unless an alternative is agreed with SLT

### Staff absence due to personal illness or injury

- A staff member who is unable to attend work through ill health must notify SLT as soon as possible and no later than 7.30am if they are due to be in work that morning. They should also inform the member(s) of staff they work directly with.
- Teachers should ensure that planning and resources are available for the member of staff who is covering for them. Plan should be saved on the shared drive, emailed to the school administrator and SLT. Alternatively, hard copies should be available in a folder in the classroom.
- The staff member should explain their reason for absence and an estimate of how long they are likely to be absent from work. They must phone school by 3pm on the day they have been absent to let us know whether or not they will be returning to work the following day.
- On return to work from an absence longer than 3 days, a self-certification must be completed. Once the absence goes over 1 week, a doctor's note is required.
- For absences of more than 3 days, a return to work interview will be carried out with SLT to check that the staff member is fit to return.
- The statement/certificate should state the period of time that it covers. If the staff member remains unwell, they should obtain further statements/certificates to cover the duration of the absence.
- If a member of staff becomes unwell during the working day and needs to leave before their normal finish time they should inform SLT. They will be recorded as being absent from work from the time that they leave work.
- The school administrator will ensure that **all** periods of sickness absence are accurately recorded on SIMS in line with the school's administrative arrangements.

### Staff absence for other reasons

- Staff members are allowed time off for other reasons. These might include: personal/family reasons such as taking care of an ill family member, compassionate leave, attending a wedding or funeral of a family member, graduation. The authorisation is discretionary and carefully monitored over the year. The staff member can take paid leave for up to two days within a year. After this, it is expected that staff who are absent from work due these reasons will not be paid.

## **14. Biblical underpinning for Church of England schools**

In Luke 7. 1-10 Jesus meets a centurion who has a sick servant, He wants Jesus to heal his servant. The centurion has lots of local supporters. "This man deserves to have his servant healed, he loves our nation and has built our synagogue" (v4b,5). The centurion says to Jesus "Say the word and my servant will be healed" (v7b). He understands authority and the God given authority of Jesus.

This teaches us that the good conduct of teachers

- arises from a genuine love of those served and a concern for their pupil's well-being
- and comes from understanding that one is under authority
- and from understanding the nature of leadership, and how it is to be followed by pupils

Faith, character and conduct are all intertwined; even in a centurion, a 'God fearing Gentile', who was not a Jew like Jesus.

The community of the children in the school learn their conduct by the way their teachers lead. The teachers good conduct grows into a deep appreciation of their teacher's character, as pupils learn to follow the lead the teacher gives. And if the teacher has a faith, that may be applauded too.