



**BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT**  
**FOR SCHOOLS**



Adopted by Resources Committee  
at its meeting on: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024  
Signed:   
Name: S. Kemp  
Position: Chair Governors  
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*Growing together with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.*

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## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**

### **WHO THE CODE IS AIMED AT**

St. Joseph's Catholic School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for students in their care. This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe: it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

School staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the school, including administration and the Headteacher;
- all staff in units or bases that are attached to the school i.e. Footsteps

This Code is not intended to replace the 'Teachers' Standards' which applies to all teachers employed under Teachers' terms and conditions.

### **OVERVIEW**

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all its employees. This Code provides guidance as to the Standard of Conduct, which the school expects of its employees to assist them in their day-to-day work. Any breach of this Code may be investigated under the school's Disciplinary Procedure and action taken appropriately.

#### *Selflessness*

Employees should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

#### *Honesty and Integrity*

Employees should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

#### *Objectivity*

Employees should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

#### *Accountability*

Employees should be accountable to the public for their actions and the way they carry out their responsibilities and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

### *Respect for Others*

Employees should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

### *Duty to Uphold the Law*

Employees should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

### *Stewardship*

Employees should use the authority's/school's resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

The Council/School expects high standards from its employees because:

- Council/school services can affect the health, wealth and well-being of local people
- the Council is subject to democratic control and is accountable to the electorate
- local people fund Council spending and take an interest in the way money is spent

## **STATUS OF THE CODE**

The aim of the Code is to establish guidelines for Bracknell Forest Council employees including school staff which will help maintain and improve standards and protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism. It may be supplemented and clarified by additional guidance where necessary.

## **STANDARDS**

Employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to Councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed school procedures and, without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to their head teacher or Chair of Governors any impropriety, unless an employee has reasonable grounds to believe that their head teacher or Chair of Governors is party to the impropriety (in such cases the School's Whistleblowing Procedure may be used).

## **DISCLOSURE AND USE OF INFORMATION**

Information which an employee receives which might reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature should not be disclosed to anyone else except in the following circumstances: -

- the person imparting the information has given their consent to the disclosure
- the information is disclosed to another employee or to a Councillor on a "need to know" basis for the proper fulfilment of their responsibilities
- the disclosure is required by law.

Employees should not prevent another person from gaining access to information which that person is entitled to by law.

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

### **CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

Employees subject to Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks in their capacity as an employee who are subsequently convicted of an offence which may impact on their work with the Council/School are required to report that conviction to their head teacher. Failure to do so may become a disciplinary matter, the seriousness of the matter being dictated by the nature of the offence and the role of the employee.

### **DISQUALIFICATION UNDER THE CHILDCARE ACT 2006**

These Regulations prohibit anyone who is disqualified under the legislation from working in a relevant setting.

The Regulations cover staff working in nursery, primary or secondary school settings if they are employed and/or provide early years childcare (this includes from birth until 1 September following a child's fifth birthday i.e. up to and including reception age) or later years childcare (this covers children above reception age but who have not attained the age of 8) or if they are directly concerned with the management of such childcare.

Employees must inform their head teacher immediately if they are disqualified under the Regulations. Disqualification means where the person is either:

- included on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List;
- being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults;
- certain orders in relation to the care of children;
- refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare, or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering
- being found to have committed an offence overseas which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 Regulations, if it had been done in any part of the United Kingdom

Failure to report this to the head teacher may become a disciplinary issue.

### **POLITICAL NEUTRALITY**

Employees must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise their own political impartiality, or that of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council/School.

Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must have proper regard to every lawful expressed policy of the school/Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

Employees must not infringe the requirements of legislation not to publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Teachers**

Mutual respect between Teaching Assistants, administration staff and teachers is essential to the smooth running of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Close personal familiarity between these groups could damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other staff and should therefore be avoided.

### **Councillors**

Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and councillors and should therefore be avoided.

### **The Local Community and Service Users**

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by school policies.

### **Contractors**

Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors should declare that relationship to the head teacher.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, normally by fair competition against other tenders or quotations, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives. Employees must comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. No part of the local community should be discriminated against. By law, if it comes to the knowledge of an employee that a contract in which they have a financial interest, whether direct or indirect, has been or is proposed to be entered into the employee must as soon as practicable give notice in writing of that interest to the head teacher ; failure to do so constitutes a criminal offence.

### **Relatives and Partners**

Employees should not be involved in decisions relating to partners, relatives or close friends; If it comes to the knowledge of an employee that they are involved in any decision which could result in an advantage or disadvantage to a partner, relative or close friend the employee must, as soon as practicable, inform their head teacher.

## **APPOINTMENT AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment that was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment

where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner etc.

## **APPLICATIONS**

Employees making applications to the Council (for example, for planning permission, purchase of land or an improvement grant) on their own behalf should notify their head teacher. However, employees may not make any applications on behalf of a member of the public.

Employees may not gain financial benefit by way of fees or gratuities or receive any other consideration for advice given to others who submit applications to the Council.

## **OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS AND USE OF RESOURCES**

All employees must consult their head teacher (or in the case of a head teacher their Chair of Governors) before engaging in any other work (whether as an employee or on a self-employed basis). All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take outside work which may conflict with the Council's interests.

Any employee engaging in outside work must give written notice to his/her head teacher (or in the case of a head teacher their Chair of Governors) setting out the nature of the work, the length and duration of the work and the identity of the person/firm/company for whom they are working.

The School / Council will retain intellectual property rights or copyrights on any matters e.g. software or written materials, developed by an employee during the course of employment with it.

Employees must not use any of the School/ Council's facilities or equipment, which may include premises, computers, materials, transport, telephones, stationery and secretarial services, other than for School / Council business or other approved purposes.

## **PERSONAL INTEREST**

Employees must declare to their head teacher (or in the case of a head teacher their Chair of Governors and in the case of a Chair of Governors to the Local Authority):

- any non-financial interests which might reasonably be considered could bring about conflict with the Council's interests.
- membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct.

The Council welcomes the involvement of employees in voluntary organisations. However, in order to ensure that public confidence is maintained an employee should inform his/her head teacher (or if a head teacher their Chair of Governors) in writing if the service which the employee gives to any such organisations could conflict with the work which the employee carries out for the school/Council or if the organisation receives a grant from or has a contract (or service level agreement) with the school/Council.

Employees must not use their position as employees of the school/Council to favour any voluntary or other bodies which they give service to. If an employee's job involves assessing a funding application or assessing an application for a consent or permission for a voluntary body which they give service to they should inform their head teacher (or in the case of a head teacher their Chair of Governors) in writing and seek their guidance of the manager.

## **PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

A Prejudicial Interest is a matter which affects an employee's financial interest or relates to a licensing or a regulatory matter in which he or she has an interest and where a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think that the employee's personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice his or her judgement of the public interest. A Prejudicial Interest in a licensing or regulatory matter may stem from a direct financial interest or from a more tangential interest, where, for instance, approval for a licence may affect a body with which the employee has a personal interest or will affect him or her personally.

Employees with a Prejudicial Interest should declare such an interest to their head teacher or if a head teacher to their Chair of Governors. Where possible, they should take steps to avoid influential involvement in the matter. Where this is not possible, the Prejudicial Interest and its nature must be made clear.

## **EQUALITY ISSUES**

All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity. All employees are required to observe the law and the policies of the school regarding non-discrimination and the promotion of equalities.

## **TENDERING AND FAIRNESS TO CONTRACTORS**

Employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness. Employees must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

Employees who are privy to confidential information concerning tenders or quotations from either internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any other party or organisation unless such disclosure is required by law. For these purposes, confidential information includes the amount of any sum comprised in a tender or quotation, the identity of those submitting tenders or quotations, the identity of others who have been invited to tender or quote and any other information the disclosure of which could be used to undermine the integrity of the tendering or quotation process.

Information given to suppliers should be limited to that required for submitting their own tender or quotation. For the avoidance of doubt information or clarification requested by a party who has a personal interest in or been invited to submit a tender or quotation may be provided to all persons expressing an interest and who have been so invited provided such information does not concern the content of a quotation or tender submitted by another party.

## **CORRUPTION**

Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. If an allegation is made it is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

## **USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the school.

## **EXPENSES**

Expenses should only be claimed in accordance with the School's Expenses Policy.

## **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Gifts and hospitality accepted by an employee must be recorded in the appropriate gifts/hospitality register. Similarly, gifts and hospitality given to external organisations or individuals must, be recorded in the appropriate gifts/hospitality register; the head teacher must approve these.

### **Giving Hospitality and Gifts**

- Offers of hospitality should only be given if the event to which an external organisation or its representative is invited is directly related to the school's business.
- Where employees issue invitations to external organisations or individuals, these must be properly authorised by the head teacher and must be recorded in the appropriate register when the cost exceeds £25.
- Other than small items of token value (£25 or less) personal gifts to contractors and/or outside suppliers should never be given or offered.
- When offering authorised hospitality, all employees should be particularly sensitive to the timing of possible decisions which the school may be taking which could affect those accepting the hospitality offered. The extent of the hospitality offered must be reasonable and proportional to the event/activity for which it is being offered.
- The use of school resources to fund or part fund internal parties e.g. a retirement party for a long serving employee would not be considered a suitable use of school resources and could lead to disciplinary action against the person who authorised such expenditure.
- Each head teacher may, however, identify a separate budget from which they may incur expenditure for the holding of functions to promote staff morale and/or to celebrate the securing of an award or achievement by the school.

### **Offers of and Receiving Hospitality and Gifts**

- Cash, cash vouchers, token and monetary gifts should always, without exception, be refused.

Offers of hospitality should only be accepted if there is a genuine need to impart information or if it is appropriate that the school should be represented at the function in the interests of working effectively with partner organisations. In deciding whether to

accept any offer of hospitality regard should be had to the timing of the functions and to public perception as to whether attendance of the function by a school employee would be appropriate.

- Attendance must be properly authorised and recorded in the hospitality register for the school.
- Where hospitality has to be declined, this should be done in a courteous, polite and firm manner whilst informing those making the offer of the school's procedures.
- Other than small items of token value (£25 or less) personal gifts from parents/carers, contractors and outside suppliers must never be accepted.
- When receiving authorised hospitality, all participants should be particularly sensitive to the timing of possible decisions which the school may be taking which could affect those providing the hospitality.

Employees, cannot directly or indirectly in connection with their office or employment, personally accept any fee or reward whatsoever other than their proper remuneration.

### **SPONSORSHIP – GIVING AND RECEIVING**

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner, relative or close friend must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the appropriate manager of any such interest.

Similarly, where the school through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

### **CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA**

Employees must observe the school's rules on contact with the media in particular: -

- only those employees who are in the list of staff for press contact held by the Local Authority Communications team may give information to or answer questions from the Press
- employees on the authorised list are only permitted to release factual information in reply to questions from journalists. All comments of a political nature are for Councillors only.
- employees should not use the media as a vehicle to promote personal grievances; the school's proper processes should be used.

### **APPEARANCE**

The appearance which school employees present to the public, Councillors and to each other is important. Although many styles of dress are acceptable, employees must dress

appropriately for their job and give a positive image of the service they provide. Any special clothing or identification provided by the school should be worn where required.

## **WORKING SAFELY**

The school is committed to promoting good health, welfare and safe working among its employees. Each employee has a legal obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and for the safety of others who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions. Employees should ensure that they: -

- follow safety policies, instructions, guidance etc
- comply with hygiene requirements
- wear any safety clothing supplied by the school
- report any accidents or near misses at work
- never risk injury or danger to themselves or others.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Except for medical reasons, employees must not take any substances that may affect their work. Employees must not consume alcohol when they are on duty or whilst wearing school supplied uniforms which mean they can be clearly identified as a school employee unless agreed beforehand for a specific occasion by their manager. Employees must ensure that any alcohol which they consume out of working hours (including lunchtime) will neither impair their work nor cause them to conduct themselves to damage the good reputation of the school. Employees and Managers affected by this issue should refer to the School's Substance Abuse Policy.

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

Employees are expected to show loyalty to the school and support its managers. A climate of mutual confidence, trust and respect between managers, employees and other partners is critical to achieving the school's aims and providing high quality services. Within the workplace, employee behaviour should be conducive to a productive and harmonious work environment, with all employees having a right to be treated with courtesy and fairness. Unless there are good reasons why not (e.g. for legal reasons or in accordance with the Whistleblowing Procedure) employees should always first follow recognised internal procedures to resolve problems.

Employees should carry out any reasonable and lawful instructions given by their manager. If an employee disagrees with or wishes to query an instruction the employee should express their concern to, or seek clarification from, the manager who gave the instruction.

Employees should work reliably and diligently. They should complete accurately and honestly any document form or record needed for work.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DATA SECURITY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Employees must ensure that they follow the school's rules and procedures in relation to the use of emails, the internet, social media and the proper use and management of data. The

school's data protection policy requires the school and its employees to abide by its principles in the use of data.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Staff employed in work in respect of which there is a recognised Code of Professional conduct (e.g. Teachers' Standards) should comply with such Codes irrespective of whether they are members of that professional body.