



# Employee Code of Conduct

Date Approved: September 2021

Date of Next Review: September 2024

## 1. Purpose

Students and stakeholders of Northern Leaders Trust are entitled to expect high standards of conduct from all employees and workers. This code of conduct outlines the rules that apply to staff employed or engaged to work in our schools and services and provides guidance to help keep to them. The code sets out the minimum standards that are expected of employees/workers and provides a framework that will help to prevent misunderstandings or criticism.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Northern Leaders Trust:** The Trust has a general role in ensuring that appropriate standards of conduct are established and maintained.
- **Trust Leaders:** The principal of each school is responsible for ensuring that staff and workers are made aware of the Code of Conduct as part of their induction programme. In the case of Trust Central Services staff, this will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive. They will also consider declarations made by the employees under the code and will ensure appropriate action is taken to deal with any alleged breaches.
- **Employees:** All staff employed at the school are required to keep to the standards of this code and carry out their duties honestly and fairly. Failure to do so is a serious matter and could result in disciplinary action including dismissal. Staff should therefore read the document carefully and if they have any queries contact their immediate line manager or principal.
- **Workers/Volunteers:** All workers on site, i.e. volunteers, trainees/work placements, contractors and third party agency workers, are also required to keep to the standards of this code and carry out duties on behalf of the school honestly and fairly. Where the term 'staff' or 'employee' is used below, this applies equally to these groups.

## 3. Trust Vision and Values

Students are at the centre of everything we do. Through collaboration, every aspect of our work is of high quality. Our academies deliver an ambitious and inclusive curriculum. This enables all students to have high aspirations and to excel academically and socially.

Our vision is underpinned by The One Trust Rule that must be adhered to at all times by staff, students and stakeholders across the Trust:

### THE ONE TRUST RULE

“Every student and adult is expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people and their wellbeing at all times.”

### Trust Values

We expect all staff, including supply staff and volunteers to share and adhere to the following values:

**Humility** – acknowledge success is a result of everyone’s hard work

**Integrity** – do the right things at all times

**Together** – collaboration over competition

**Shared expectations** – One Trust Rule

**Leadership** – everyone can be a leader

**Inclusivity** – high aspirations of all, uniqueness is celebrated

**Kindness** – value everyone’s voice

**Excellence** – in everything we do

**Reflectiveness** – learn and improve

## 4. Policy statement

Northern Leaders Trust endorses the Seven Principles of Public Life proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life chaired by Lord Nolan. These are:

**Selflessness:** People who work for the public should take decisions by thinking only of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain any benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

**Integrity:** People who work for the public should not put themselves under any financial or other obligation to any outside person or organisation that might influence them in carrying out their official duties.

**Objectivity:** In carrying out public duties, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, choices should only be made on merit.

**Accountability:** Those working for the public must answer for their decisions and actions to the public and be open to whatever questioning is appropriate to their job.

**Openness:** People who work for the public should be as open as possible about and give reasons for decisions and actions they take. They should restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly requires this.

**Honesty:** Those working for the public have a duty to declare any private interests to do with their public duties. They must resolve any possible conflicts of interest in a way which protects the public interest.

**Leadership:** People who work for the public should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Trust also expect employees to operate in accordance with the codes of conduct provided by their relevant professional body.

## 5. Staff Behaviour: Everyday expectations

### 5.1 Safeguarding routines

- All teachers and cover staff must ensure that registers are marked in line with school policies.
- All staff must wear their ID badge at all times.
- You must challenge any stranger who you come across without ID in school. Please accompany them immediately to reception and alert a senior member of staff.
- You must notify reception in advance if you have arranged for visitors. Visitors will not be allowed past the main gates if this is not done. They must be met at reception and escorted at all times in school.
- All students must enter and leave school sites via their designated entrance. Under no circumstances, should any member of staff let students in any other entrance before school. Please challenge any student trying to enter the building through any other entrance following school behavior policies if necessary.
- If a member of staff sees an external door open, they must close it immediately.
- Please also ensure that you only enter or leave the building via doors that are **not** fire exits.
- Staff must not park in the drop off / pick up bay in the car – park on yellow lines or on a pavement. Where school parking permits are required (i.e. on the Kenton School site), these must be displayed at all times.
- Please do not open the toilets for students unless you are able to remain to lock it up when they've finished.
- Under no circumstances should students be given access to staff keys or fobs.
- It is absolutely imperative that all staff sign out through the 'Inventory' system if leaving the site during the school day, then sign back in on return.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that all their belongings are kept safe and secure.
- Staff must ensure that any medication that they have is kept locked in a secure place and cannot be accessed by students.
- Staff must ensure that professional standards are maintained at all times including out of hours events such as school proms. Staff must not drink alcohol at such events or purchase drinks for students even if they are over 18 years old.
- Teaching Staff must adhere to the requirements of the Teacher Standards in relation to Personal and Professional Conduct at all times.

## **5.2 Behaviour routines**

- Staff must ensure that they follow school behavior policies rigorously.

- Maintain a high presence on the corridors and challenge all inappropriate behaviour - using school behavior policies where necessary.
- Please ensure that if you are scheduled to be on duty, you are present and pro – active in performing your duties. If you are not there, it places extra pressure and responsibility on your colleagues who are. Please make suitable arrangements if you are unable to carry out your duty.
- Staff must not allow students to leave their classes mid lesson. If there is a valid reason for this, a note should be made in planners. Students should not need to use the toilet during class (unless they have a medical condition) or leave class to fill up water bottles.
- Staff and students can only carry hot drinks around school if they are in a covered and secure cup.

### **5.3 Working practice**

- Staff should ensure that they keep themselves and students safe when working in a 1:1 environment. Doors should be left open, windows and glass panels should remain clear and students should be sat nearer to the door to enable a safe exit if they feel uncomfortable.

### **5.4 Use of staff photographs**

- All staff are expected to have their photograph taken for staff ID purposes. These images will then be used for corridor displays to enable students to easily identify staff members.

## **6. Standards**

- All employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service and to carry out their duties honestly and fairly.
- All employees must report anything illegal, improper or a breach of procedure. School staff must report to their Principal, or if the concern relates to the Principal, the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Governors. Central services staff must report to the Chief Executive Officer, or if the concern relates to the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair of the Trust. Employees will not be penalised for doing this as long as they act in good faith. The Principal/CEO/Chair of Trust must record, investigate and take appropriate action on such reports.
- It is not enough for people working for the public to avoid doing wrong. All employees should avoid anything which could give the impression or appearance of doing wrong.

## **7. Safeguarding welfare of children and young people**

- All staff are required to work within the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and any additional statutory, trust or school guidance provided. This aims to safeguard children and young people and reduce the risk of staff and other adults in schools being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.
- Staff receiving information about allegations of child abuse should report such information in accordance with Trust and school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Allegations against staff must be reported in accordance with the Trust Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff, Volunteers and Agency Workers.
- If during the course of your employment, you become aware of allegations raised by a third party in relation to your conduct or suitability to work with children and young people in or outside of work, i.e. social services, police, TRA or DBS investigation, you must notify your Principal or the CEO immediately.

## **8. Health and Safety/Covid-19 Requirements**

- Staff are required to follow Government legislation and guidelines and any relevant school risk assessments in relation to Covid-19, both during and outside of working time in line with this code.

## **9. Disclosure of information**

- The law requires that certain types of information must be open to other agencies, service users and the public. An employee should always check first with the Trust Data Protection Officer if they are in any doubt as to whether the particular information should be released.
- Employees must not use any information they get in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. They must not pass information on to others who might use it for their own gain.
- Employees must only give confidential information or documents to those who have a legitimate right to them and appropriate security measures must be taken in line with Trust Data Protection policies
- Employees other than the Chief Executive Officer or Principal should not make statements directly to the press or other media without first obtaining the approval of the Trust, except in the case of trade union representatives who are communicating with the media in that role. Principals’ should consult with the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Trust and Chair of the Governing Body before making statements to the press or other media on major policy issues.

## **10. Political neutrality**

- Employees serve the trust and local governing bodies as a whole and must treat all trustees and governors equally and make sure that their individual rights are respected.

- Employees must not allow their own political opinions to interfere with their work.
- Employees may not display political posters, including election material, in areas of school premises or other council buildings which the public has access to. Trade union representatives may display trade union/association views on current issues on the appropriate authorised notice boards within the school.
- Where political views are brought to the attention of pupils within the school or during extracurricular activities they should be in the form of a balanced presentation of opposing views.

## 11. Relationships

- **With trustees and governors:** Mutual respect between employees, trustees and governors is essential to good school governance. An employee who believes that a trustee or governor has acted improperly towards them may report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of the Trust or Principal who will take appropriate action.
- **With the local community and service users:** Employees are expected to be polite, efficient, fair and impartial when they provide services to all groups and individuals within the community they serve.
- **With contractors and suppliers:** All relationships of a business or personal nature outside work with external contractors or suppliers must be declared to the Trust Director of Finance and Human Resources Manager at the earliest opportunity. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit and no special favour should be shown to anyone.

## 12. Recruitment and other employment matters

- Employees involved in appointing people to posts must ensure that they follow the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and Safer Recruitment Practice as outlined in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.
- In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in any appointment where they are related to or have a close personal relationship outside work with the person applying. Staff shall disclose to Human Resources any relationship with any person who they know is an applicant for a post at the school.
- Employees should not be involved in, or try to influence, decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay for any employee who is a relative or with whom they have a close personal relationship outside work.

## 13. Commitments outside work

- Employees' off-duty hours are their private concern as long as they do not:
  - put their private interests before their duty to the school or trust;

- put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests conflict or could appear to conflict; or
  - do anything which could adversely affect their suitability to carry out their duties or the reputation of the school or trust
  - do anything that could adversely affect the health and wellbeing of colleagues, students and stakeholders.
- Teaching staff graded U1 and above and support staff graded N7 and above may not carry out any other business or take up any additional employment without the permission of the Trust. Requests for permission should be submitted to the Principal (or Chief Executive Officer for trust central services staff). The trust will not unreasonably prevent you carrying out other employment. However, this employment must not, in the view of the trust, conflict with its interests and specific conditions may be laid down or weaken public confidence in the school or trust. The following conditions apply to all commitments outside work:
    - employees must not carry out private work (whether paid or unpaid) relating to the school or trust without permission from the trust;
    - employees must not carry out any work related to a private interest (including taking or making telephone calls) during normal working hours;
    - an employee must not use the school's facilities or equipment or confidential information; and
    - all approvals will be reviewed and may be withdrawn if thought necessary.
  - The provisions of this section do not apply to trade union officers engaged in legitimate trade union duties and activities.

## **14. Personal interests**

- Employees must declare to the Chief Executive any financial or non-financial interests that could conflict with the school's or trust's interests.
- Sections 3.1.17-18 of the Academies Financial Handbook requires senior employees and budget holders to make a formal declaration about any contract with the school or trust where they have a financial interest. This declaration must be made to the Chief Executive Officer through completion of a Register of Pecuniary Interests form obtained from the Finance Department. Failure to comply with this is a criminal offence.
- Employees must not be involved in decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.
- Employees must declare membership of any organisation that is not open to the public, does not have formal membership and has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct. This declaration should be made to Human Resources in the first instance.
- Involvement with organisations whose principals are in contravention of our core ethos and values, such as the EDL, will be considered to be a breach of acceptable standards within this Code.



## 15. Social Media

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site. Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

- Staff must ensure that they must not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or students of the school in any personal social media whilst in employment. Staff must not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of either school within the trust under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and Safeguarding; this is Richard Devlin at Kenton School and for central services staff and Val Wigham for Studio West.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts. Please be aware that the school treat any communications on social media as 'in the public domain.'
- Business must be made from an official school email account. Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Principal.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts. Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts as any posts which may harm the reputation of the school or wider trust can be considered a breach of this Code.

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the school has an official Twitter and Facebook account. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to Network Manager or member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school. All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link to the school website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the Trust.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents /carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT.
- Staff must not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.

## **16. Equality**

All members of the local community and employees have a right to be treated fairly. Employees must follow trust policies on equal opportunities.

## **17. Corruption**

It is a serious criminal offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts for employees to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage or to show favour or disfavour to any person. If an allegation is made it is for the employee to prove that any rewards have not been corruptly gained or given.

## **18. Use of financial resources**

- Employees involved in financial activities and transactions must follow the Trust's Financial Regulations and guidance and the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook.

- They must use public funds in a responsible and legal way, try to make sure that the school provides value for money to the local community and avoid legal challenges to the school or wider academy trust.
- Employees involved in the tendering process or dealing with contractors must ensure that they follow trust financial regulations and the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook.
- Employees must deal fairly and impartially with all customers, suppliers and other contractors and sub-contractors and ensure that confidential information on tenders or costs relating to contractors must not give that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.

## **19. Gifts and other benefits**

- The offer of gifts or benefits in kind to employees (or their partners or family members) arising from their official duties could cause conflict between their private and public interests.
- Unless the exceptions below apply, employees should refuse any personal gift offered to them, their partner or family member by any person or organisation who has dealings with the school or trust. Employees must declare to Human Resources any offer and say what action they have taken. This should be given to the Chief Executive if the offer is to the principal. The exceptions are:
  - gifts made at the end of a courtesy visit to an organisation that are of a promotional nature and of a kind normally given by the organisation;
  - gifts of token value, i.e. less than £25.00 such as diaries, calendars and pens; or
  - gifts of token value given by pupils or parents at Christmas or at the end of term.
- As offering gifts is a common practice in the business world particularly at Christmas time, they should be refused politely. If, for example, a gift is simply delivered to an employee's place of work, there may be a problem returning it, in which case, it should be immediately reported to the Principal or Chief Executive who will decide on the appropriate action.

## **20. Hospitality**

- A modest amount of entertainment is a normal part of public life but it is important not to risk undermining public confidence or allow it to appear that it may improperly influence the way employees carry out their duties.
- Employees must be particularly careful if they are offered hospitality by someone who wants to do business with or obtain a decision from the school or trust. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence. Employees should accept an offer of hospitality only if they genuinely need to go to an event to receive or give

information, represent the school in the community or make prior visits to check arrangements, particularly in relation to health and safety (for commercially organised visits, journeys or activities involving pupils). They should only accept offers to attend purely social or sporting occasions if these are part of the life of the community or the school should be seen to be represented.

- If hospitality has to be declined, this should be done politely with an explanation of the rules on hospitality.
- Employees should notify all offers of hospitality to the Principal or to the Chief Executive if the offer is made to the Principal or a member of trust central services staff. This is not required if the hospitality is of token value, for example a single drink.

## 21. Sponsorship

- The above rules relating to gifts and hospitality also apply where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is approached to sponsor a school activity. This may be by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily. Employees should be particular careful when dealing with current or potential contractors.
- Any employee who, or whose partner or family member, would directly benefit from sponsorship of an activity by the school, must declare this to the Principal or Chief Executive.
- Employees must give impartial advice and avoid any conflict of interest where the school gives support in the community through sponsorship, grant aid or financial or other means.

## 22. Retention and access to declarations

- Information declared by staff will be retained in accordance with the trust Data Protection and Retention and Destruction policies.

## 23. Relationship with other policies and procedures

- **Disciplinary Procedure:** This procedure should be used to deal with an allegation against a member of staff that they have acted in breach of this policy.
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:** This sets out the school's arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and should be followed if an allegation concerns abuse of a child.
- **Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff, Volunteers and Agency Workers:** This should be followed if it is alleged that a member of staff, volunteer or agency worker has abused a child.

## 24. Monitoring and review

- Feedback is encouraged from the trust, local governing bodies and principals on the effectiveness of this policy. It will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is appropriate in light of recommended best practice and complies with employment law. In the event of any conflict with statute, the legal provisions will have precedence over this policy in all cases. The trust should monitor their application of this policy, particularly to ensure that their practices comply with it and are not discriminatory.