

Curzon Crescent & Fawood Children's Centres Partnership



Code of Conduct Policy (Adopted Brent Council)

Reviewed – Autumn 2018

Review – Autumn 2020

Policy Lead – Executive Head

Approving Committee- Resources

Contents:

Introduction	3
Misconduct and Gross Misconduct	3
Working for our School Community in Brent	4
Political Neutrality	4
Working for your Manager	5
Managing Staff	5
Respecting your Colleagues, Pupils, Parents and Carers	6
Working Honestly	6
Working with Integrity	7
Working with Sensitive Information	7
Working Within the Law	8
Using Social Media	8
Working with the Media	9

Introduction

This code is binding on all Partnership employees. It sets out the expected standards of behaviour of all employees. It provides a framework for employees that will help to maintain and improve standards. The code also protects employees from misunderstanding or criticism.

It does not replace other employment policies, procedures, regulations and rules and codes of practice operating within the Partnership.

The code is not a complete list of what you can and cannot do. Its aim is to set out clearly the basic ground rules that all employees must observe.

We must all:

- give our communities the highest standards of service
- work in partnership with governors, senior staff and colleagues, fostering good working relationships
- do nothing to harm the School's/Children's Centre's reputation, in and out of work
- work consistently and in support of the Partnership's policies and procedures
- abide by the following seven guiding principles: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Partnership places great value on the key contribution of all employees in achieving these aims, and is committed to creating a working environment where staff are highly motivated and able to provide excellent education to the pupils of Brent. In return, employees can expect to be treated courteously and with respect by governors, senior staff, colleagues and members of the public.

Breaches of the code and the standards it sets down may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. We expect all employees to operate within the law, both inside and outside of the workplace. Unlawful or criminal behaviour at work will result in disciplinary action, and even away from work, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

Misconduct and Gross Misconduct

The Partnership has in place a disciplinary procedure, which gives examples of the types of breaches of standards of behaviour that are considered to be misconduct, and therefore would result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. Some breaches are so serious that they are considered to be gross misconduct. If proven, this can result in the employee's dismissal from the Children's centre. The disciplinary procedure also gives examples of gross misconduct.

Working for our School Community in Brent

Schools/Children's Centres can have a real impact on the quality of life of the communities that we serve. It is vital that we get it right and our standards have to take into account the special requirements of staff in schools/Children's Centres. Our work is often politically sensitive and open to public scrutiny. The public is interested in what we do and how we do it. Success can depend on public confidence in our staff honesty, professionalism and hard work.

Our work is publicly funded. If we are to be above suspicion, any payments or other benefits we personally receive must be properly due to us, and any expenditure we incur on behalf of the school must be lawful and justifiable.

We are employed to work with and for the people of Brent. This requires a positive commitment to public service and means putting pupils, parents and local communities first. We have a duty to give our best at all times, to be open, helpful and professional in our approach. Our parents and carers are entitled to have confidence in our services, which depends on all of us being considerate, responsible, sensitive and mindful of the need to respect confidentiality. Of course, the school/Children's Centre is also committed to protecting its employees from aggressive, abusive or bullying behaviour from members of the public, including parents and carers.

While working within this Partnership it is important that

- you are polite, responsive and helpful
- you comply with any Dress Code that is applicable
- you never make remarks that are racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, offensive to people who are disabled or other religions
- you do not harass or discriminate against any member of the public or anyone you meet in the course of your work. The school/Children's Centre treats very seriously complaints of harassment or discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or age
- you avoid any conduct in public areas of the school/Children's Centre or other council buildings which may discredit the Partnership.

Political Neutrality

Employees serve their governing body as a whole and must treat all 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/Children's Centre 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, or in other places with the permission of the head of Centre.

Where political views are brought to the attention of pupils within the school/Children's Centre or during extracurricular activities they should be in the form of a balanced presentation of opposing views and be relevant to the subject being taught

You must disclose to your head teacher any family, business or personal relationships with governors where this may, or may appear, to put you in a position to exercise improper influence over the workings of the school/Children's Centre

You must not canvass members on employment related matters nor seek to influence governors prior to any meetings of the Staffing, Appointments or Appeals Committee other than in the context of giving proper professional advice. This does not include Trade Union representatives who may wish to make representations about relevant issues.

Working for your Manager

You are expected to show loyalty to the school/Children's Centre and to support its managers. A climate of mutual trust, confidence and respect between managers and staff is essential to achieving the school's aims and objectives, meet its performance targets, and providing the highest quality or education.

In performing your duties, make sure that you:

- work diligently and reliably, and never neglect your duty
- co-operate with managers, always be polite, helpful and respectful
- never lie to, deceive, abuse or undermine them
- carry out any reasonable management instructions
- fill in honestly any document, form or record your managers need for work
- never falsify any document
- never wilfully destroy any document that you know is needed by your managers
- be at work on time
- tell your manager if you will be late for work (for example, for a doctor's visit)
- agree in advance with your manager and obtain their approval for any leave or other time off you want
- follow the school's/Children's Centres rules on reporting any absence, including absence due to sickness
- never claim sick leave when you are not sick
- if you are on sick leave, act sensibly to speed your recovery and return to work, and do nothing deliberately that you know would delay your recovery or worsen the problem

- do not drink alcohol to the extent that it adversely affects your work, performance, attendance or behaviour. You should not be under the influence of alcohol, including having alcohol on your breath during the school day
- never drink alcohol on school/Children's Centre property unless at an approved social function, e.g. a leaving do, or official school/Children's Centre function
- never take illegal drugs or any banned substance on school/Children's Centre property
- comply with the school/Children's Centre 'Access to Information Policy'
- comply with the school/Children's Centre 'No Smoking Policy'.

In performing your duties make sure that you do not display any of the following behaviours:

- aggressive behaviour, shouting or threatening, impolite or discourteous behaviour
- unwelcome, sexual advances including touching, standing too close or circulating or displaying offensive material
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- ridiculing or demeaning someone or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- behaviour or decision-making which is based on improper prejudice
- making unjustified, persistent criticisms
- intimidating or undermining any member of staff whether they be in a senior or junior position
- making threats or comments which are without foundation, about job security and intentionally blocking off promotion or training opportunities
- making someone the butt of jokes.

Managing Staff

The people that the Partnership employs and the way they work are the key to its successes. The Partnership wants its senior leaders to provide staff with sound leadership, clear direction, support which is appropriate to the employee's needs, and the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities to enable them to properly fulfil their role.

When supervising or managing staff, ensure that you:

- manage in accordance with the School's/Children's Centre policies and procedures
- set acceptable standards of conduct at work
- support and assist staff to carry out their work properly
- consider the training and development needs of your staff to enable them to meet the current and future school/Children's Centre needs
- deal with staff fairly and consistently, and in accordance with the principles of equality of opportunity
- accept responsibility for the work you and your staff do
- provide a working environment that is free from any form of discrimination, unfair treatment, bullying or harassment

- are alert to and correct unacceptable behaviour
- raise any concerns in a private and confidential place wherever possible
- ensure staff can seek advice when raising harassment problems
- take all complaints seriously, and thoroughly investigate them
- where appropriate, report unacceptable behaviour to senior management
- deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly and confidentially
- do not:
 - act in an overbearing manner (ie using unwarranted excessive supervision)
 - wilfully neglect to supervise your employees properly
 - misuse your power or position.

Respecting your Colleagues, Pupils and Parents and Carers

When dealing with your colleagues, pupils, parents and carers make sure that you:

- set a good example by treating all your colleagues, pupils and parents and carers with politeness, courtesy, respect, fairness, consistency and confidentiality. (however, confidentiality will only be maintained where this does not impact on the school/Children's Centre vicarious liability)
- never make remarks that are ageist, homophobic, racist, sexist, belittling of a person's religion, offensive to the disabled or otherwise improper
- do not harass, bully or discriminate against any colleague. The school treats very seriously complaints of harassment or bullying, or discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or age
- are polite, responsive, helpful and professional

Working Honestly

We expect you to use public money and resources with complete honesty and be able to demonstrate that at all times.

Ensure that you:

- avoid corruption and the suspicion of it
- do not ask for or accept bribes of any sort
- never seek or take any reward or favour for providing services apart from your pay
- do not take a reward from anyone who has, or might have a business relationship with the School/Children's Centre, or anyone who stands to lose or gain from a School/Children's Centre decision
- do nothing that could be seen as likely to improperly influence your work, your decisions or your impartiality
- comply with the school/Children's Centre policy on gifts and hospitality

- tactfully refuse any gifts of more than token value from an organisation or individual with which the school/Children's Centre does, or may do business
- do not accept hospitality exceeding a minimum level of common courtesy from an organisation or individual with which the school does, or may do business, other than in accordance with the school's/Children's Centre policy on gifts and hospitality
- record any offers of gifts and hospitality in the School/Children's Centre Gifts and Hospitality Register
- do not use improper influence to get people you meet through your work to leave you things in their will
- report to your manager if people you meet through work leave you things in their will
- never obtain School/Children's Centre property or money when you are not lawfully entitled to it (this includes subletting School/Children's Centre or council property without approval)
- do not fraudulently claim housing benefit, or any other benefit from the council, or any administered by the Department of Work and Pensions or Inland Revenue
- do not commit fraud or theft against any organisation or individual, including when claiming housing benefit or income support
- do not falsify documents to claim pay including a bonus, overtime or sick pay
- do not make personal use of School/Children's Centre property, facilities or equipment unless you are properly authorised to do so
- do not engage in private work i.e. business or take up an appointment outside the School/Children's Centre (paid or unpaid) unless you have prior consent from your manager (this only applies if employed on a full time basis)
- never do private work when you should be working for the School/Children's Centre or are on sick leave (consent will not be unreasonably withheld)
- never abuse your own position with the School/Children's Centre to benefit yourself, your family, your friends or any outside organisation or political party.

Working with Integrity

We expect you to do whatever is needed to protect your own reputation and standing with the public and to build respect for the School/Children's Centre. There should be no reason to suspect that any of us are seeking opportunities for private gain. The relationships that the School/Centre has with its partners, contractors, consultants, community groups, suppliers and others must be responsibly managed so as to ensure there can be no suspicion of corruption or dishonesty with public money.

Ensure that you:

- do nothing away from work, which might damage public confidence in the School/Centre, or make you unsuitable for the work you do

- never, without good cause, wilfully withhold any payments you owe to the school/council such as rent or council tax, or salary/wages overpayment
- be fair and impartial in dealing with all parents, competitors, suppliers, contractors and sub contractors
- complete a declaration of your financial and other interests if you are graded PO1 and above
- inform your head teacher if you have links with a firm or organisation, which may get money, grant awards, contracts or work from the school
- inform your head teacher if you have a relationship with someone, which might appear to improperly influence a decision one might make about the other in connection with the work of the school. This includes things like being someone's landlord, being in debt to someone, or having a close personal relationship with a governor, council member, parent or carer or employee where this might lead to a conflict of interest
- never use your work to further the aims of any group whose ideas are in conflict with the School/Children's Centre values and policies
- inform your manager if you are charged with or convicted of a crime.

Working with Sensitive Information

We expect you to use sensitive information properly and to have due respect for any confidentiality and the integrity and availability of information generally. The School/Centre is required to make appropriate information available to governors, council members, internal and external auditors, government departments, parents and carers and the general public. Information you gather while working for the School/Children's Centre should not be used for commercial or personal gain or be otherwise misused.

Ensure that you:

- know what information, to which you have access, the School/Children's Centre treats as sensitive. The information may be marked to inform you of this, or you will be briefed appropriately. If you are unsure then seek clarification from your manager
- know who else is entitled to have access to information that you have access to
- do not discuss sensitive information in public places, and never gossip about or misuse sensitive information
- protect information when it is in your care. This includes when you are in possession of information away from School/Children's Centre buildings
- are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on pupils, parents and carers, staff and others
- never create or amend information records or other information whether held on paper record or on computer system which relates to yourself, your family, relatives or friends without prior authorisation from your manager.
- use personal information held on computer in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act.

Working Within the Law

The School/Children's Centre expects you to work within the law. A framework of laws and regulations set school powers. In order for its decisions and actions to be held to be reasonable in law, the school/Children's Centre must carry out its business in a way that is within its powers, and is rational, proper and fair. Unlawful or criminal behaviour at, or even away from work, may result in a loss of trust and confidence in the employee, or the School/Children's Centre.

Ensure that you:

- uphold the law at work
- comply with the School/Children's Centre standards.

Using Social Media (for example Facebook, Twitter)

Individuals employed by the School/Children's Centre are entitled to use whatever system they like outside of their working time and working persona, to engage in the social aspects of the media – both broadcasting and receiving. However great care should be taken to ensure the private/work line is not crossed. It is good practice to follow the practice of never mentioning work, your opinions of your colleagues or processes and projects on your own private Social Media Networks.

You must be aware that posting information about the School/Children's Centre and or Council can not be isolated from your working life. Any information published online can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see.

It is generally unacceptable and inappropriate for School/Children's Centre staff to have contact with pupils on social media sites.

Any inappropriate comments postings or correspondence with pupils, parents, carers or other members of staff could lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Working with the media

The school expects staff to promote the work of the school/Children's Centre and to act as ambassadors. Relations with the media require specific skills and expertise and staff should not discuss school business with the press without prior permission.

Ensure that in relation to your school/Children's Centre you:

- refer appropriate enquiries from the press to the Head Teacher
- seek advice from the Head Teacher and get permission from your manager before you speak to, write to, or give interviews to the media

- never bring the school into disrepute by publicising material, which is confidential, or against the interests of the School/Children's Centre, or criticises its employees
- do not bring the School/Children's Centre name into disrepute in any other way through the press or media.

It is acknowledged that Trade Union representatives will on occasion give interviews to the media on relevant subjects.