



Symphony Learning
TRUST



Employees' Code of Conduct Policy 2018-2021

Adopted by Symphony Learning Trust on	Autumn 2018
Next Review Due	Autumn 2021

Please note, when this policy refers to the 'Head teacher' it also includes the Head of School and Executive Head teacher.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Code of Conduct applies to all employees working in Symphony Learning Trust. For the purpose of this Code, reference to employees also includes workers and agency workers. It is intended as a guide to assist all those working within this Trust understand and comply with the Trust's expectations in terms of their standard of conduct and behaviour. All employees are expected to adhere to the principles contained within this Code during the course of their work and/or when representing their Trust/ academy or the Trust.

1.2 We aim to provide a high quality provision for all pupils, staff and any external companies with whom we may have business with, and promote public confidence in the integrity of the Trust. All employees are expected to reflect high standards of behaviour both at work and in their private life and set a good example to pupils and other at all times. Employees should be mindful of their behaviour outside the Trust and the reflection this may have on themselves, the Trust and their profession.

1.3 Mission Statement

Symphony Learning Trust strives to be an employer of choice and we believe that staff are our greatest asset and by empowering staff to believe in themselves will enable Symphony Learning Trust to deliver on its mission of 'Aspiration, Innovation, Excellence' for all of our pupils, staff and the wider community

1.4 All employees of this Trust must ensure that they adhere to the relevant professional standards for their role, as listed below. Employees must also safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in their profession, as part of their professional duties.

- *Teachers Standards (2012)*
- *National Head Teacher Standards (2014);*
- *National Standards for Subject Leaders (1998);*
- *SenCo Standards;*
- *Draft National Standards for Trust Leaders;*
- *Trust Leadership Standards;*
- *National occupational standards for supporting teaching and learning in Trusts;*

1.5 This Code complies with the requirements of relevant legislation, and reflects the Trust's Policies and Procedures, as amended.

- 1.6 All employees must read this Code carefully (and alongside the Trust's policies and procedures) and seek advice and guidance on any matters that they do not fully understand.
- 1.7 Any breaches of this Code may result in a formal investigation being carried out under the Trust's Disciplinary and Grievance policies and procedures and could result in disciplinary action.

2. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

- 2.1 This Code is underpinned by the principles set out in the Trust's Equality Statement:-

The Trust is firmly committed to the principle of equal opportunities in both the delivery of services and employment, and expects all member schools to share this commitment. Equality of opportunity means that children and their families, all other service users, job seekers and employees will be treated equally and fairly regardless of their: colour; race; nationality; ethnic or national origin; religion; gender; marital status; sexuality; disability; age; or any other unjustifiable criterion. All schools within the Symphony Learning Trust will seek to create an environment in which services and employment are provided without fear of discrimination. The Trust is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and harassment of any kind. Through joint ventures each school seeks to increase its efforts to deal firmly with instances of discrimination and harassment, including racial abuse and attacks, wherever they occur. The Trust has responsibility for establishing and Equal Opportunities Policy, and the Head Teacher of each member school is responsible for its implementation throughout the school. The associated "Equal Opportunities in Employment: Guide to Good Practice" sets out the action required to implement the policy in this area of activity. In employment, the Trust is committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community that each school serve

- 2.2 All employees have a personal responsibility to promote equality and diversity within this Trust in respect of their colleagues, governors, pupils, their parents/carers and the local community.
- 2.3 **Equality**
Employees will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

2.4 Diversity

Employees will recognise and value diversity of others within the work place and understand how any differences can benefit others, our Trust and the local community.

3. DIGNITY & RESPECT

3.1 As per section 1.2 all employees are expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour and personal conduct at all times to ensure that everyone in Trust is treated with dignity and respect.

3.2 A respectful workplace:

- welcomes all;
- encourages employees to be the very best they can be;
- promotes equality of opportunity and treatment of others;
- respects diversity;
- promotes employee health and wellbeing;
- communicates expectations around behavior and personal conduct;
- strives for improvement and transparency;
- encourages open and honest communication between employees; and
- ensures that all disputes at work are dealt with effectively under the relevant policies and procedures.

3.3 All employees are responsible for treating others, including governors, colleagues, pupils, parents and carers, with dignity and respect and will not purposely make anyone feel excluded or unaccepted.

3.4 All employees must act with personal and professional integrity, respecting others by:

- never using inappropriate or offensive language in Trust;
- acting in the best interests of the Trust and its ethos;
- being honest and acting with integrity;
- treating pupils and others with dignity and respect;
- showing tolerance and respect for the rights and beliefs of others;
- acting as a role model for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour;
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- not expressing personal beliefs in a way that will overly influence pupils, exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;

- conforming with Equal Opportunities legislation in all aspects of their work.

3.5 Where an employee believes that they have been unfairly treated they may refer to the Trust's Grievance Policy. Where it is found that an employee has exhibited inappropriate behaviour, formal disciplinary may be taken.

4. SAFEGUARDING

This section should be read in conjunction with the "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children in Education Settings" and KCSIE.

4.1 All employees, governors and volunteers will be given a copy of the following documents:

- The Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- KCSIE document part 1.
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children in Education Settings.

4.2 All employees, governors and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils to ensure they are not harmed or at risk of harm.

4.3 Any concerns about breaches of the KCSIE, unsafe practice or potential failures by the Trust or its employees **must be reported** to the school/academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. Concerns in respect of the Executive head teacher or Head teacher should be raised with the Chair of Local Governors.

4.4 All employees will receive appropriate Safeguarding/Child Protection training. If for any reason an individual misses this training, alternative arrangements should be made as soon as possible. All employees will be expected to keep up to date with any changes made to the KCSIE document.

4.5 The documents at 4.1 **must** be read and understood and any queries should be directed to the SLT. Employees are asked to sign a copy of these documents to confirm that they have read and understood these and will agree to abide by them at all times during their employment

4.6 Please refer to the school/ academy's Safeguarding Policy to find out who the Safeguarding Leads are for each individual school/academy.

4.7 LADO contact details: 0116 305 4141 / 0116 305 4532.

5. DATA PROTECTION & CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.1 Employees are privy to confidential and sensitive information about the Trust, their colleagues, volunteers, pupils and their parents. The Data Protection Act 2018 states that anyone who is responsible for using personal data must follow strict data protection principles.
- 5.2 All employees must therefore ensure that any information collected is:
- used fairly, lawfully and transparently;
 - used for specified, explicit purposes;
 - used in a way that is proportionate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary;
 - accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
 - kept for no longer than is necessary;
 - handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage.
- 5.3 Employees must:
- not disclose, or use (directly or indirectly) any information (either about Trust business, employees, pupils, parents, or external agencies) received in the course of their work or allow others to do so whether during their employment or after their termination. Any such data must only be accessed by authorised users for legitimate purposes;
 - not use data held by the Trust for any purpose other than that for which it is intended;
 - ensure that all data is kept secure (i.e. locked away or protected by password) and that data on screens or within documents are not left within view of others;
 - not disclose or display information about logins or passwords for automated devices, or keycodes or similar for manual locks;
 - ensure that when sharing personal or sensitive data external to the Trust, that it is done by secure methods taking care to minimise the risk of loss and making sure it reaches the intended recipient.
- 5.4 When an employee is in doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they must seek guidance from the or Head Teacher.
- 5.5 Employees must follow and comply with the Trust's data handling/information security/privacy notice at all times. Failure to do so is considered a serious breach.

6. DECLARATION OF INTEREST / CONFLICT

- 6.1 The Trust understands and encourages employees to undertake activities outside of work and take an active role in their community. However, employees should avoid any activities that have the potential to cause a practical conflict with their employment, or reputational harm to the Trust or undermine the Trust's trust and confidence in them.
- 6.2 If a conflict, or potential conflict, arises during the course of an employee's employment with the Trust, this must be declared to the Head Teacher for their consideration as to whether it would be appropriate to continue with the activity. Where an employee fails to comply with instructions from the Head Teacher it may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of employees to declare any interests or conflicts. Failure to do so may be considered a disciplinary matter. Any concerns or queries regarding interests or potential interests should be discussed with an employee's line manager at the earliest opportunity.

7. GIFTS & HOSPITALITY

- 7.1 Employees should not accept or give any significant gifts or offers of hospitality, as this could be perceived as an act of bribery to influence decisions or may be construed as favouritism, which might then compromise the individual or the Trust. The term "gift" can also include the provision of services at a lower cost than that charged to the general public.
- 7.2 Employees should notify the Head Teacher if they receive any gifts of substantial value or significance and, where possible, decline the offer politely and firmly. If in doubt employees should discuss the matter with the Executive Head teacher or Head Teacher.
- 7.3 Any provision of hospitality that is seen as necessary to represent the Trust may be accepted with the approval of the Head Teacher (or in the case of the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors).
- 7.4 Gifts of appreciation such as gifts at Christmas or "Thank You" gifts given at the end of a Trust term, which have no substantial financial value (less than £25) can be accepted and do not need to be declared to the Head Teacher.

7.5 Under no circumstances should employees accept cash as a gift, even below £25, unless it is cash for donations to the Trust's charitable funds. Any such donations must be handled in line with the financial procedures.

8. MOBILE PHONES & HAND HELD DEVICES

8.1 Other than in exceptional circumstances which has been agreed with the head teacher, personal mobile telephones and handheld devices must not be used:

- during lesson times/when teaching is taking place;
- when supervising pupils outside of the classroom (e.g. at break times/lunch times);

8.2 Employees must ensure:

- Their mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices are stored securely during working hours on school premises or when on outings. (This includes visitors, volunteers and students)
- Photos should be put on the school system or other school agreed social media(e.g Twitter) as soon as possible and not sent to or kept on personal devices
- School staff will have access to a school mobile which can be used for emergency or contact purposes. If there is no school mobile, staff will use their personal mobile phone.

Employees must not:

- use their personal mobile phone or devices to contact pupils or their parent/carers, unless in an emergency;
- give out their personal phone numbers or contact details, including personal email addresses to pupils or their parent/guardians;
- use their phone within toilet or changing areas

8.3 Where there is a need to deviate from any of the above (e.g. in an emergency situation), employees must inform the Head Teacher immediately or as soon as practically possible.

8.4 The above points aim not only to protect pupils but also to protect employees from allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour.

8.5 Employees bringing a personal mobile phone or hand held device into any Trust property do so at their own risk. The Trust will not be held responsible or accept any liability for personal equipment that is lost or is stolen.

9. NOTIFICATIONS OF CONVICTIONS / CAUTIONS

9.1 Employees **must** disclose **any** cautions or convictions:

- prior to or on appointment;
- at any other time during their employment. Where employees receive any new cautions or convictions during their employment at the Trust this must be disclosed to the Head Teacher. Consideration will be given to how the caution or conviction impacts on an individual's role within Trust.

9.2 The above also applies to any driving convictions received by prospective and existing employees.

10. PERSONAL APPEARANCE & DRESS CODE

10.1 It is important that all employees ensure that their dress and personal appearance is appropriate at all times. All employees must therefore:

- be responsible for their general presentation and personal appearance;
- be considerate of and promote a positive image of the Trust;
- ensure that clothing and any jewellery worn is appropriate to the role being undertaken (N.B. It is recognised that some roles will require employees to wear sports clothes, such as those involved in PE. For these individuals appropriate sportswear and equipment should be worn and jewellery must be kept to a minimum to avoid injury);
- ensure that clothing and/or personal appearance is appropriate and will not cause embarrassment or offence to others. Clothes should be non-offensive and contain no provocative logos or remarks;
- ensure that clothing does not over-expose parts of the body (e.g. stomach or chest) or is transparent;
- ensure that footwear is suitable for the duties undertaken.

10.2 Health & Safety:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn as directed/instructed/trained or where a risk assessment indicates that it is necessary to control residual risks.

10.3 Religion & Faith:

- The Trust recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements.
- Employees of particular faiths or religions, who are required to wear specific types of clothing will be respected subject to where this may pose a hazard to the health and safety of anyone or where this impacts on

teaching and learning.

10.4 Hair:

- Hair should always be worn tied back when handling food or where there may be a health and safety risk.

10.5 Tattoos:

- Any visible tattoos should not be offensive to others. Where they are deemed to be offensive or are of an adult nature they should be covered appropriately.

10.6 The above list is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principles listed above. The Trust reserves the right to highlight any inappropriate clothing and may require employees to address this matter if considered necessary.

10.7 There may be times when employees wish to support different charities and they would like to ask for exceptions to the normal rules, for example, Jeans for Genes Day and Christmas Jumper Day. On these occasions employees must still be mindful of the principles contained within the code.

10.8 Failure to adhere to the Trust's standard of dress and appearance could constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

11. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

11.1 It is recognised that there may be occasions where personal relationships exist amongst individuals at work. Where such employees are, or may be, working closely with colleagues with whom they have a personal relationship, they must:

- ensure that any such relationships do not adversely affect their employment or ability to carry out their role;
- protect against bias/unfair advantage or prejudice, particularly where they have supervisory or managerial responsibility over another;
- avoid situations where there is potential for conflict of interest;
- ensure that situations do not develop where other employees feel unable to speak openly and honestly, or feel that a relationship is having an adverse impact on their own employment;

11.2 The reason for this is to protect all parties from any accusations of breaches of confidentiality or the abuse of authority or conflict of interest.

11.3 A **personal** relationship is defined as:

- A family relationship (e.g. Grandparents, in-laws & step-parents), siblings and children & grandchildren (including in-laws and step children)
 - A sexual/romantic relationship (e.g. spouses or partners)
 - A business/commercial/financial relationship; or
 - Any other close personal friendship or relationship
- NB. This is list not exhaustive.

11.4 An employee involved in any part of the recruitment process who has a personal relationship with an applicant should declare this from the outset. They should also not act as a referee for that person where possible. Such employees must not be involved in the following:

- Recruitment processes;
- Decisions relating to pay in respect of that individual;
- Decisions related to or the management of the employees performance;
- Any conduct issues that arise that may involve the employee.

11.5 Disclosure of a Personal Relationship

Employees must disclose in writing to the Head Teacher any personal relationship which develops or ends during the course of employment. If an employee is in doubt as to whether their relationship should be disclosed, they should seek advice from the Head Teacher. In these circumstances, any disclosure will be treated fairly and confidentially.

12. PHOTOGRAPHS & RECORDING

12.1 Employees must only take photographs/videos of pupils and/or their colleagues for Trust purposes in accordance with the Trust's procedures as outlined in each school's Safeguarding Policy

12.2 Photographs taken for official Trust use may be covered by the Data Protection Act 2018 and/or the Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) document, and pupils/employees should be advised of the reasons why any photographs or videos are being taken.

12.3 Where images of pupils/employees are used for publicity purposes, appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents/carers must be obtained. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without explicit consent.

12.4 Employees who are not clear on the use, collection or handling of data, including photography or recordings, must seek advice either from the Head Teacher or the Trust's Data Protection Officer. Ignorance regarding Data Protection regulations cannot be used as an excuse for failing to comply with the requirements and will be treated as a serious issue.

13. PROTECTION OF TRUST PREMISES / PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT

13.1 Employees are responsible for the safe keeping and the appropriate use of the Trust premises, property and any equipment belonging to the Trust that is under their control or in their possession. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Trust owned documents;
- Trust Books, including text books, reference books etc;
- Laptops/tablets;
- Mobile phones/hand held devices;
- Office equipment;
- Keys;
- Security passes;
- Credit cards;
- Any other property that may be given to individual employees.

13.2 Employees must:

- take good care of Trust property and equipment, when used both on-site or outside of the Trust premises;
- ensure that all property and equipment is maintained appropriately in accordance with the Trust policy;
- take reasonable steps to ensure the security of Trust property at all times; this includes taking all steps to ensure that the property is not misplaced, lost or stolen, ensuring confidential information cannot be viewed, accessed or copied;
- obtain written permission for use of Trust property/equipment where this is for non-work purposes, setting out the clear use/purpose and duration;
- not use the Trust's property/equipment if intoxicated through alcohol consumption or drug taking;
- comply with Health and safety obligations at all times;
- respect both the Trust premises and equipment;
- on the termination of their employment, return all Trust property.

14. SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

14.1 Employees may take up additional employment, paid or unpaid, providing it will not create a conflict of interest, cause the Trust reputational harm or adversely affect an employee's ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities for the Trust effectively and efficiently.

14.2 Paid or unpaid employment includes, but is not limited to:

- taking up employment with any employer on any type of contractual arrangement;
- running your own business;
- private tutoring;
- holding directorships or trusteeships;
- participating or having any other interest in organisations that may be a competitor or supplier to the Trust.

14.3 Prior permission must be sought from the Head Teacher before taking up any additional employment. Carrying out public duties (e.g. jury service) does not count as additional employment.

14.4 Employees must not use any Trust property or facilities to support additional employment without prior permission from the Head Teacher and any customer must be informed that the private nature of the work is not connected with the Trust.

15. SICKNESS ABSENCE: REPORTING PROCEDURES

15.1 It is essential that all employees comply with the procedure for notifying the Trust of any absence in accordance with the Trust's arrangements.

Each school in the Trust will have a local arrangement for reporting absences. Refer to the school/ academy Staff Handbook for details.

15.2 Once an employee has notified the school/ academy of their absence, the employee should maintain regular contact with the school/academy.

15.3 Employees who are absent for:

- More than three calendar days must complete a self-certification for their absence.
- 7 calendar days or more must provide a valid Fit Note from their GP/Consultant.

15.4 Failure to follow the sickness reporting procedures may result in disciplinary action.

16. SMOKING & SUBSTANCE MISUSE

16.1 SMOKING

Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere on any Trust site or in the immediate vicinity. Appropriate signing out must take place when any employee leaves the premises. This is only permitted at lunch times, except where in the normal performance of duties.

16.2 ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE USE

Employees:

- Must not be under the influence of alcohol or any substance which affects their ability to perform their duties, including driving, operating machinery and supervising pupils;
- Must never possess alcohol or illegal drugs to consume at work. Non-prescription drugs, such as ibuprofen or paracetamol and prescription drugs must be kept in an appropriate secure location away from pupils;
- Must advise their manager if they are prescribed any medication which may affect their performance or ability to carry out their duties;
- Must alert the school/academy and seek professional help as soon as possible if they have alcohol or substance misuse problems and commit to a programme to achieve a successful recovery;
- Must report to the Head teacher or member of the SLT when they suspect that someone is under the influence of or abusing alcohol or substances.

16.3 National support and advice can be obtained from organisations:

- Drinkline: A free and confidential helpline for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking: 0800 917 8282.
- Smokefree: NHS stop smoking support: www.nhs.uk/smokefree.
- FRANK: Advice on what to do to help someone who's having a bad reaction to drugs: www.talktofrank.com/emergency-help.

- LA counselling service

17. SOCIAL MEDIA

For more information on the acceptable use of Social Media this section should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Social Media Policy

- 17.1 Social media is constantly evolving and employees are therefore reminded of their continued responsibility to keep up to date with relevant developments and review their privacy settings on a regular basis when using all social media. Personal profiles must not be accessible to pupils and/or parents and all employees must ensure that any content that is posted or shared is appropriate.
- 17.2 Employees are personally responsible for the content that they publish on social media sites, including “Likes” (on Facebook)/“re-tweets” (on Twitter), You Tube, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Yammer, WhatsApp etc.
- 17.3 It is important when using social media that all employees ensure that they do not bring the Trust into disrepute, by making potentially false, derogatory, offensive or defamatory comments, either directly or indirectly, about the Trust, colleagues, individuals, pupils or parents etc that could negatively impact on the Trust's reputation or cause embarrassment. This includes posting images or links to inappropriate content or using inappropriate language.
- 17.4 Employees must note the following (this list is not exhaustive):
- Assume that everything can be traced back to them personally as well as to the Trust, their colleagues, pupils and parents;
 - Avoid any conflict of interest and ensure that personal social networking sites are set to private and pupils are never listed as approved contacts. An exception to this may be if the child is the employee's own child, relative, or family friend;
 - Potentially false, derogatory, offensive or defamatory remarks (direct or indirect) regarding the Trust, employees, pupils, pupils' relatives, the Trust suppliers and/or partner organisations must not be posted on social media site;
 - Employees must not represent their own views/opinions as being those of the Trust;
 - Pupils must not be discussed on social media sites;

- Information must not be posted that would disclose the identity of pupils or could in any way be linked to a pupil. This includes photographs or videos of pupils or their homes;
- Employees must not divulge any information that is confidential to the Trust or a partner organisation;
- Employees must not post information on sites including photographs and videos that could bring the Trust or themselves into disrepute;
- Employees must not upload, post, forward or post a link to any pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
- When posting on social media sites employees must observe the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and must not use any offensive, obscene, derogatory, discriminatory language which may also cause embarrassment to the Trust, employees, pupils, pupils' relatives, Council suppliers and partner organisations;
- Employees must never impersonate another person;
- Employees must not upload, forward or post a link which is likely to: create any liability for the Trust (whether criminal or civil), breach copyright law or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person;
- Employees must not engage or communicate with students and/or parents regarding any Trust matters via their own personal social media accounts. Only the use of Trust accounts is permitted for this, and only where there is good reason for doing so;
- Employees must not post content that may breach professional standards or the standard reasonably expected of an employee.

17.5 The Trust will take disciplinary action against employees for inappropriate use of social media, including use of social media conducted outside of working hours.

18. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

18.1 Failure to adhere to any of the principles of this Code of Conduct may constitute grounds for disciplinary action and could result in summary dismissal. This includes:

- A personal breach of the Code;
- Failing to promptly report a suspected breach of the Code;
- Encouraging others to breach any part of the Code.

18.2 Employees who do not understand any of the principles contained within this Code of Conduct should seek advice and clarification from the Head Teacher.

