



The Federation of the Church Schools of  
Shalfleet and Freshwater & Yarmouth

*Together for a Brighter Future*

# Code of Conduct and Personal Behaviour

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>DD/SH</b>
<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Staffing</b>
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<b>Ratified/FGM Date</b>	

## **1. Policy statement**

- 1.1. The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet believes that it is essential for standards of conduct at work to be maintained to ensure high quality education and to protect the wellbeing of all its staff team, volunteers and pupils. The following policy will make sure that the staff team and volunteers are aware of the standards set by The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This code of conduct is designed by the Federation to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff are expected to observe. As a member of the Federation community, each staff team and volunteer has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

All staff teams and volunteers in the Federation are expected to set the best possible example of behaviour and conduct. The staff teams and volunteers should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty. Breaches of conduct and personal behaviour will be dealt with under the Policy and Guidance for Discipline.

The staff team and volunteers in the Federation have an absolute duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in the school, and to take appropriate action where they consider that a child may be at risk of suffering harm.

Registered Teachers are in addition bound by the codes and professional values of the Department of Education. While Registered Teachers are bound by the code, the Federation consider the principles to apply to all staff employed in the Federation and not exclusively to registered teachers.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. The policy applies to all the staff team, volunteers and temporary/casual workers of the Federation.

## **4. Equal Opportunities**

- 4.1. Our Single Equalities Policy reflects the Federation's core values. The staff team and volunteers are entitled to fair treatment by others, and to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they are expected to treat others in this way.

## **5. Other Supporting Policies**

5.1 To assist the School(s) the following policies exist in conjunction with the Code of Conduct Policy

- Child Protection
- Disciplinary
- Child on Child Abuse
- Complaints
- Single Equalities
- E-Safety
- Data Protection
- Whistleblowing
- Safer Recruitment
- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff
- Managing Allegations Against Other Children

## **6. Confidentiality**

6.1 Staff teams and volunteers must not disclose official/confidential information. The staff teams and volunteers must not use 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.

6.2 Information on pupils may not be disclosed without the consent of the child's parent, or where a child is of reasonable understanding, the child. The only exceptions to this are:

To safeguard the welfare of the child, information may be disclosed in accordance with the school's child protection policy, the Local Authorities' Child Protection Guidance (<https://www.iowscp.org.uk>) and Working Together To Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated 2023).

Where information is requested by the Police to detect or prevent offending.

Where otherwise allowed to be disclosed by a legal obligation (for example, to give information to a child protection case conference), or an Order of a Court.

6.3 It may not be appropriate to agree to maintain confidentiality, where to do so would cause harm or allow unacceptable practices to persist. For further information see the Whistleblowing Policy

## **7. Disclosure of information**

- 7.1 The staff teams and volunteers of the Federation may in the course of their duties have access to confidential information. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to LA Members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public.
- 7.2 Staff teams and volunteers must not use any information obtained during their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it for personal advantage.

## **8. Disclosure of personal information relating to staff teams and volunteers/pupils/public**

- 8.1 Many members of staff and volunteers have access to personal information relating to other staff team members and volunteers, pupils and other members of the public. All staff teams and volunteers must treat this information in a discreet and confidential manner, under the new GDPR regulations (2018) and adhere to the following guidelines:

Written records and correspondence should be kept securely at all times.

Information relating to staff/pupils/public must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to unauthorised persons.

Information relating to pupils/public must not be given over the telephone unless the caller has given details of their right to ask for such information and this has been verified.

Confidential matters relating to staff/pupils/public should not be discussed in areas where they may be heard by passers-by, i.e. corridors, reception, staff room, etc.

Any breach of confidentiality may be regarded as misconduct and be subject to disciplinary action, see the Disciplinary Policy.

- 8.2 As a general rule, the staff team must not make statements or write letters to the media and be very mindful of their use of 'social media', especially regarding confidentiality, personal behaviour and publishing information about the Federation, colleagues or other people. If in doubt they should refer such matters to their Headteacher.

## **9. Additional activities including conflict of interest**

### **9.1 Additional activities**

- 9.1.1 The policy does not bar all outside work, however, the staff team must be clear about their contractual obligations and must not take outside employment that conflicts with the Federation's interests or damages the Federation's interests or reputation or prohibits them from fulfilling their contractual obligations to the school to the standard required.

## **9.2 Conflict of Interest**

- 9.2.1 The staff teams and volunteers should ensure before they undertake additional employment that there is no conflict of interest with their duties or with the Federation's interests.
- 9.2.2 Any staff member, who believes that she or he is in a situation that may cause a conflict of interest, should discuss their situation with their Headteacher.
- 9.2.3 Where this is not declared and there is a clear conflict of interest this may be considered misconduct. Where there is a financial/other benefit to the staff member it may be seen as gross misconduct. Where there is a likelihood of dismissal for inappropriate personal interest, it is the responsibility of the Federation to demonstrate that there is a genuine financial risk in continuing to employ the staff teams and volunteers in the same capacity. An investigation will be necessary before beginning such a course of action. Below are further examples of what constitutes personal interest:

Staff team members must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all parents, pupils, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors and no part of the local community should be discriminated against.

Staff team members who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

Staff team members, who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously, had or currently have a private or domestic relationship with them, must declare that relationship to the Headteacher.

- 9.2.4 Staff team members must also declare an interest where:

They have membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct.

Where a staff team member allocates school places to an acquaintance or relative.

## **10. Relationships**

- 10.1 Staff team members should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.

## **11. Appointment and Management of staff**

- 11.1 Staff team members involved in the recruitment of internal and external staff must ensure that the decision to appoint is based on merit, (see Safer Recruitment Policy). An appointment that is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the job may leave the Federation vulnerable to allegations of discrimination. Staff team members must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to the applicant, or have a close personal relationship with him or her.
- 11.2 For the purposes of this guidance the definitions of partners/relatives are ongoing personal and emotional relationships, marriage and close family members.
- 11.3 It is the policy of the Federation that spouses/partners will not be performance managed by their spouse/partner in relation to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments. This will ensure that our parents and staff feel confident that decisions within the Federation are made in a fair and equitable way based on the reasonable application of professional judgement.
- 11.4 If a personal relationship develops where there is a performance management responsibility, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors must investigate the situation and discuss the issues with the staff team members concerned. Where there is evidence that the working relationship will cause a conflict of interest i.e. where it involves financial and/or contract work the Headteacher must look for an alternative post for one of the staff team members involved. The decision of who should move to an alternative post must be based on the degree of impact the loss of either staff team member would have on the particular service. Each case must be decided on its merits to ensure that the decision made is on objective and reasonable grounds and not unfairly discriminatory.
- 11.5 There may be the opportunity to retain both staff team members in the same area if another staff team member can take on the line management element of the role or if the work can be re-arranged. A decision can only be made once a full investigation has taken place and the staff members have had an opportunity to express their views. Where there is no alternative post or way of working, this may result in dismissal for "some other substantial reason". Headteachers must ensure that the decision to redeploy or dismiss is fair and based on measurable criteria. A full investigation must be undertaken before a decision is made. Dismissal is not automatic all other avenues must first be explored.

## **12. Gifts and Hospitality**

- 12.1 Staff teams members should not accept any personal gifts from pupils and their families, contractors and external suppliers unless the gifts are insignificant item.

### **13. Acceptance of gifts**

13.1 Under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1906 and 1916 it is an offence for an employee of a public body in his or her official capacity to accept any gift, inducement or reward, including hospitality, for showing favour or disfavour to any person or other organisation. It is the responsibility of the person receiving the favour to prove that it was not received dishonestly. The following must be considered:

Staff members acting in an official capacity must not give the impression that their conduct both inside and outside work with any person or organisation is influenced by the receipt of gifts, rewards and hospitality or any other such consideration.

Staff team members must think about the circumstances in which they are made offers and be aware that they may be regarded as owing a favour in return.

Staff team members must seek permission from their Headteacher before accepting such offers and be aware that the offers may have to be returned/refused.

When gifts/hospitality have to be declined those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Federation.

13.2 How a staff team member should react to an offer depends on the type of offer, the relationship between the parties involved and the circumstances in which the gift or hospitality is offered:

Staff team members must not be seen to be acting in their own personal interests and need to be careful that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted.

An offer of a bribe or commission made by contractors, their agents or by a member of the public must be reported to the line manager. Hospitality from contractors should also be avoided for where staff team members are singled out for example Christmas lunch etc... this may be perceived as preferential treatment.

Staff members must not accept significant personal gifts. However, there are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value

Staff members must be particularly wary from accepting gifts from a pupil where it is suspected that a pupil has a crush on the member of staff.

13.3 No one working for, employed by, or providing services on behalf of the Federation is to make, or encourage another to make any personal gain out of its activities in any way. Any person becoming aware of a personal gain being made at the expense of the Federation, contractors or the public should follow the Whistleblowing Policy.

13.4 The acceptance of gifts and hospitality may be a subject of criticism placing the Federation in a position that it has to defend such action. Consequently, it is essential that all details of gifts and hospitality (except small tokens by children or parents as detailed above) be recorded

#### **14. Sponsorship –Receiving**

14.1 Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor a Federation activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic principles concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

#### **15. Matters of Conscience**

15.1 Where a staff team member believes he or she is being required to act in a way which is illegal, improper, unethical, or in breach of the Federation's conventions, which may involve possible maladministration, or which is otherwise inconsistent with the Policy for Conduct he or she should refer to their line manager or Headteacher or to the Whistleblowing Policy.

15.2 Where a staff team member or volunteer is aware, or has evidence of illegal, improper or abusive behaviour of another staff team member or volunteer he or she should refer to the Headteacher or the Single Equalities Policy.

15.3 Where a staff team member and/or volunteer is aware, or has evidence of illegal, improper or abusive behaviour of another staff team member or volunteers towards a pupil, he or she must notify the Head teacher immediately, unless the allegation is against the Headteacher, when he or she should bring it to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

15.4 Where a staff team member fails to report such concerns outlined in paragraph 15.3, this may be construed as misconduct and lead to disciplinary action.

#### **16. Personal behaviour**

16.1 The Federation believes in treating all staff team members and volunteers with respect and trust in a mature, respectful and considerate manner and expects the same approach from them. The Federation expects the staff team and volunteers to respect the Federation's property, other staff team members and volunteers and their property, suppliers and the public at all times. Staff team



members and volunteers also demonstrate the characteristics they are trying to inspire in pupils. Failure to observe the standards of behaviour expected breaks the bond of trust that is fundamental to the employer/staff team members relationship and may lead to disciplinary action.

The Disciplinary Policy will be initiated where any staff team member is found to be in breach of this Policy. If a staff team member is found guilty of gross misconduct he or she may face dismissal.

**17. Absence from work**

17.1 All leave, including leaving the premises due to illness should be approved prior to it being taken. This includes parental leave, special leave, etc. Failure to notify absence is unauthorised absence.

**18. Poor timekeeping**

18.1 The Headteacher has set a timekeeping standard that is known to all staff members. This standard should be applied consistently with staff arriving and departing from their place of work at the agreed times.

19.2 Staff team members must inform their Headteacher of their whereabouts and expected time of return when they are out of the office e.g. off-site meetings/visits etc.

**19. Negligence**

19.1 Negligence arises from failure by the staff team member to exercise reasonable care in his or her work. Staff team members must not cause loss or damage through carelessness, negligence, a reckless act or breach of instructions. It is only a disciplinary offence if the individual is considered to be personally responsible.

**20. Refusal to obey a reasonable instruction**

20.1 It is the responsibility of all staff team members to carry out reasonable instructions. In those circumstances where a staff team member refuses to obey a reasonable instruction, it will be necessary to investigate the situation and depending on the outcome of an investigation it may result in disciplinary action. See the Whistleblowing Policy, where refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction is linked to a matter of conscience.

**21. Social behaviour**

21.1 Staff team members should be aware of the following expected standards of behaviour when attending work related events in and outside of worktime where attendance could be seen as representing the Federation.

- The Conduct and Personal Behaviour Policy will still apply e.g. regarding drug/ alcohol abuse, harassment and discrimination.
- Consideration and respect for others

- Those in a position of management/supervision should not behave in any way that could undermine their position
- The Federation should always be seen in a favourable way by the public
- General behaviour when in public places should always be considered.

21.2 Staff team members using private vehicles for Federation business must ensure:

- The vehicle is road worthy and complies with Road traffic/Transport regulations.
- That the vehicle is insured for “business use”
- They are licensed to drive the vehicle
- They do not drive under the influence of drink/drugs or where there is ill health that may impair their ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- They abide by the current Road Traffic/Transport Regulations.

## **22. Alcohol/drugs**

22.1 Staff team members must ensure that they are not unfit for duty as a result of the effects of alcohol or prescribed drugs. Staff should be aware of the lasting effects of alcohol and prescription drugs, and ensure that any consumption of these substances does not impair their ability to discharge their duties. See Appendix 1 for further guidance.

## **23. Smoking**

23.1 It is prohibited to smoke on the school site.

## **24. Health & Safety**

24.1 Staff team members have a duty to familiarise themselves with all the safety regulations that apply to their job and the area in which they work. Refer to the School’s Health and Safety Policy.

## **25. Fraud and Corruption**

25.1 A staff team member who commits a fraudulent act is liable to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal and possible criminal prosecution even for a first offence. Fraud is defined as any manipulation of an accounting system or supply system to enable public money or material to be misappropriated.

25.2 Staff team members involved in the investigation of alleged fraud may be required to sign an additional code of conduct relating to their specific duties.

**26. Private use of official facilities**

26.1 Staff team members are not to use official stationery for private purposes and must not carry out private correspondence during working time. Staff team members are allowed to make private essential telephone calls that cannot be made outside working hours but this privilege must not be abused and the duration of all calls must be kept to a minimum.

26.2 Staff team members must obtain prior approval from the Headteacher to borrow school property for use to work at home, e.g. laptop computer, printer, etc.

**27. Reporting of Arrests, Prosecutions, etc.**

27.1 Staff team members must report to their manager details of any arrest or criminal conviction or caution made against them by the Police (except for minor traffic offences, i.e. where they do not mean imprisonment or suspension of his or her driving licence), where the offence is also a breach of discipline and/or may have a direct impact on the staff team members job, or where it calls into question their suitability to work with children.

**28. False Statements**

28.1 Staff team members must not make any false statement e.g. on subsistence/mileage claims, etc. Where there is evidence of a staff team member submitting such claims, he or she will be liable to disciplinary action and/or prosecution under the Theft Act 1968.

28.2 Where a staff team member has witnessed misconduct i.e. a fraudulent activity; he or she will have a duty to report such an incident. See also – the Whistleblowing Policy.

**29. Discrimination**

29.1 It is the Federation's policy that all current and prospective staff teams will have equal opportunity for employment, promotion and training on the basis of relevant ability, qualifications and merit. Staff team members must ensure that they do not unfairly discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, marital status, national or ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexuality, age or religion. All job applicants and workers are treated equally and the Federation is willing to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate for disabled applicants and workers.

**30. Harassment/bullying**

30.1 The Federation seeks to provide an environment for all staff teams, volunteers, contractors and temporary workers free from harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.

30.2 Disciplinary action will be taken against any staff team member who is found to have committed a deliberate or unlawful act of discrimination, sexual or racial harassment or bullying. See the Single Equalities Policy.

**31. Abuse of the e-mail/internet**

31.1 The Federation will not accept any abuse of e-mail/internet or telephones. Such behaviour may result in disciplinary action.

31.2 The downloading, sending or accessing of offensive material that affect the dignity of any individual or group of individuals at work may constitute harassment. Threatening, obscene or harassing messages including chain e- mails and material that will cause offence and/or degrade individuals or minority groups will constitute a disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal.

31.3 Under the Obscene Publications Act 1959 an employee may have criminal liability if an individual publishes material that could corrupt or deprave the persons likely to see the material; this includes the transmission of data stored electronically.

**32. Dress and Appearance**

32.1 Dress and Appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression.

However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

## Appendix 1

### Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

1. The early identification of an alcohol or drug problem and taking appropriate action will minimise the effect of the problem on the School and other staff teams members may also help reduce any stress experienced by the individual.
2. It may be very difficult for people to admit they have a problem. There may well be a feeling of shame or fear of reprisals, particularly if they are taking illegal drugs.
3. There is no single symptom of an alcohol or drug problem. The presence of any or some of the following may indicate one (unless the staff team member is suffering from an undisclosed illness/disability):

#### Absenteeism

- Excessive sick leave, frequent and unexplained absences and lateness
- Frequent Monday and/or Friday absences
- Excessive lateness especially on Monday
- Leaving work early
- Frequent visits to the cloakroom
- Unexplained absence from post

#### High rate of accidents

- Frequent accidents at work resulting in injury and/or damage to equipment
- Accidents away from work

#### Poor work performance

- Difficulty in concentrating
- Taking longer than usual to do tasks
- Having an erratic work pattern
- Difficulty in recalling conversations, instructions or details
- Sticking to routine tasks and avoiding complex ones
- Frequent mistakes
- Improbable excuses for poor work
- Telling lies about performance
- Bad decision making
- Reluctance to accept responsibility

#### Change in personality and behaviour

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Lethargy
- Mood swings
- A tendency to blame others
- Over-sensitivity to criticism
- Problems relating to colleagues
- Avoiding company

- Changes in attitude to authority

### **Additional signs**

- Smelling of alcohol at work
- Intoxicated at work (slurred speech, unsteadiness)
- Bloodshot eyes
- Shaky hands
- Poor personal hygiene and unkempt appearance
- Frequent borrowing of money
- Loss of driving licence through drink driving

The above is only a guideline; the headteacher must investigate and not make assumptions as similar symptoms may occur in some illnesses. When in doubt managers are advised to contact their Personnel Provider.

4. The Headteacher will encourage staff team members to seek help as soon as a problem is identified. Consideration will need to be made about the most appropriate action. To help bring any issues into the open a confidential meeting should be arranged with the individual (he/she may be accompanied by either a friend or union representative).

The meeting will need to be handled sensitively and focus on the wish to improve the staff team members performance. The purpose should be to encourage the staff team member to admit there is a problem and explore the cause or reason for the problem.

It is important to establish whether any aspect of the job or stress has made the staff team member turn to drugs or alcohol.

It should be emphasised that the staff team members should be encouraged to seek help from a GP or a specialist agency.

5. Staff team members with a drink or drugs problem should have the same rights to confidentiality and support as they would if they had any other medical condition.
4. If the staff team member has difficulty in admitting there is a problem, then the Capability Policy and Guidance must be followed.

The consequences of continual poor performance need to be underlined if a staff team member is not ready to admit or refuses to recognise there is a problem. It is important to try and be supportive for as long as possible, however, where there are risks relating to health and safety action, transferring the staff team member may be necessary in the short term.

Where a staff team member continually fails to reach adequate performance levels and fails to accept help and/or improve then it may result in dismissal, through the fair application of the Capability Policy.