



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR SCHOOLS

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct draws together existing School policies and procedures and information contained within the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 The School aims to ensure the highest standards of conduct and will assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability. Employees are required, under the terms of their contract of employment with the School, to comply with the Code of Conduct and failure to do so may amount to a disciplinary matter.
- 1.3 The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the relevant documents that are referenced.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies to:
 - Employees in Schools employed under the terms of Bucks Pay Employment Conditions.
 - All temporary, casual and agency workers including supply teachers.
- 2.2 Teachers are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with both the Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers and, where applicable, this guidance.
- 2.3 Governors are expected to conduct themselves in a way consistent with the provisions of their own Code of Conduct and, where applicable, this guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers and employees have a responsibility under this Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers will:
 - Apply the policies and procedures detailed in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
 - Ensure all new employees are made aware of this Code of Conduct on commencing employment at the School.
 - Deal promptly, thoroughly, and fairly with any matter arising from a breach of this guidance.

3.3 Employees will:

- Act in accordance with the principles set out in this document in addition to the provisions of any Code of Conduct operational within the individual School.
- Never use their position for personal gain.
- Through procedures outlined in the relevant School's policies, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or breach of this guidance.
- Maintain conduct of the highest standard such that confidence in their integrity is sustained.

3.4 Employees in roles that have their own professional code of conduct must appropriately apply the standards of their profession in line with this guidance.

3.5 In relation to employees in Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body as agent of the Council.

3.6 In relation to employees in Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools with delegated budgets, the obligations of the employer reside with the Governing Body.

4. Principles

4.1 This Code of Conduct is founded on the following principles:

- To ensure the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all employees of the Council/Governing Body.
- To support the Council/Governing Body's visions and values, policies and procedures.
- To set out clear objectives and expectations for all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers.
- To ensure all employees and Teachers/Headteachers/Line Managers treat colleagues and those they interact with during the course of their work with dignity and respect.
- To ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any individual in the application of this Code of Conduct based on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other grounds protected in law.

5. Safeguarding

5.1 The Council/Governing Body has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being

of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. This includes the need to ensure that all employees who work with or on behalf of children, young people and adults with care and support needs are competent, confident, and safe to do so.

- 5.2 All employees who come into contact with children, young people and adults with care and support needs in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- 5.3 It is essential that all employees are aware of and refer to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings. This is available at the following website, [Safer Recruitment Consortium training information](#)

6. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

- 6.1 All employees owe a duty of trust and confidence to the School. If at any time during employment an employee is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence, this should be disclosed at the earliest possible opportunity. The School will then assess whether or not the charge or conviction affects the employee's suitability to perform their role and their continued employment.

7. Equalities and Dignity at Work

- 7.1 The Council/Governing Body wishes to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
- 7.2 The Council/Governing Body is committed to achieving equality of opportunity as an employer of people and educator.
- 7.3 All employees are expected to adopt the school's vision of equality of opportunity.
- 7.4 The School's Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures must be adhered to.

8. Relationships

- 8.1 The Council/Governing Body will not interfere unduly in the private lives of employees but with the public interest in mind will take legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on school services. (see Appendix 1)
- 8.2 The Council/Governing Body will regard as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an employee and a child or young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school), whom they meet because of their employment.
- 8.3 Issues involving close personal relationships at work will be approached sensitively

and managed promptly, effectively, fairly, and lawfully.

- 8.4 Employees involved in recruitment decisions must ensure that appointments are made based on merit alone. There is a strong risk of illegality if an employee makes an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the applicant to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved in appointments where they are related to an applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them or have knowledge of them in another context e.g., business associates.
- 8.5 Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner, close friend etc.
- 8.6 All applicants will be asked to declare any relationship to the Chair of Governors or the Service Director Education. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.

9. Prevention of Fraud & Corruption

- 9.1 The Council/Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services and management of its resources and assets.
- 9.2 All employees are expected to always act with integrity and to comply with legal requirements, rules, procedures, and good practice.
- 9.3 Further guidance can be obtained in the school's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework.

10. Commercial Practices including Gifts and Hospitality

- 10.1 The principal aim of the Code of Conduct on Commercial Practices is to ensure that the school's business is conducted in accordance with the very highest standards.
- 10.2 Employees should never use their position for personal gain and should seek to uphold and enhance the reputation of the School by:
 - a) maintaining a high standard of integrity in all professional relationships;
 - b) fostering the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible;
 - c) complying both with the letter and the spirit of:
 - i. the law;
 - ii. the Governing Body Standing Orders;
 - iii. any additional guidance supplied by the Council/Governing Body;
 - iv. the Conditions of Service of Employees of the Council/Governing Body.
 - v. rejecting any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.

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- 10.3 The guidelines in Appendix 2 of this document express the obligations of employees which exist in legislation or are expressed or implied conditions of appointment.

11. Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

- 11.1 Employees may, in the course of their employment become aware of personal or other confidential information, some of which may fall within the scope of Data Protection legislation. The Council/Governing Body requires that the confidentiality of this information be respected.
- 11.2 Employees 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 unless it is necessary and within the law to do so i.e. where a police investigation is necessary.
- 11.3 Any meeting recorded without the consent of all those present (covert recordings) will be treated as a conduct matter. If employees have any misgivings about either the process or the managers leading it, they should tell us openly so that we can address their concerns.
- 11.4 Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person outside of the School unless the consent of the employee is obtained first. This includes inappropriate use of social networking websites such as Facebook.

12. Communication, Computer Usage, and the Internet

- 12.1 Use of the school's equipment, systems and network is provided as part of an individual's work role.
- 12.2 Employees should be familiar with the relevant school policies surrounding computer usage, internet access and electronic communications.
- 12.3 Misuse of the equipment, systems, and network may be grounds for disciplinary action under the school's conduct & discipline Policy, which, if found to constitute gross misconduct, could render an individual liable to dismissal.
- 12.4 Use of technology to contact students can suggest an informality which is inappropriate. Great care should be exercised over the use of communications technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web cams, websites and blogs unless contact via these routes is required and for which permission has been given by a senior manager e.g. field trips and expeditions.
- 12.5 Communication that may cause offence or detriment to individuals may be subject to action under the school's conduct and discipline policy.

13. Social Media Use

- 13.1 Social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video-and image-sharing websites such as YouTube.
- 13.2 Employees must follow the school's policy on the use of social media which is available as part of the schools IT policies.
- 13.3 Employees should be aware that they owe a duty of trust and confidence to the school and Buckinghamshire Council which may be breached if unsuitable material is posted, and this includes posts made outside of working hours.
- 13.4 Posts that could be considered discriminatory against or bullying or harassment of any individual or bring the school into disrepute, will be investigated and may be subject to action under the school's conduct and discipline policy.

14. Health and Safety

- 14.1 The school is committed to promoting a healthy and safe working environment. Each employee is expected to know and to follow all appropriate health and safety requirements and has an obligation to take reasonable care for their own safety and for the safety of others who may be affected by their acts/omissions.

15. Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

- 15.1 The school is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive working environment and to minimising problems arising from the misuse of drugs and alcohol at work.
- 15.2 Those representing the school are personally liable for their conduct, specifically in relation to consumption of drugs and alcohol. They must avoid the use of illegal substances or any substance which may affect their work, or which might place them at risk of accidents, loss of efficiency or effectiveness.
- 15.3 Anyone working on behalf of the school must not possess, consume, sell or give away illegal drugs especially whilst on duty or undertaking work on behalf of the school.
- 15.4 Inappropriate behaviour as a result of substance misuse will be dealt with under the relevant policy e.g. conduct and discipline, capability.
- 15.5 Further information regarding the Schools approach to Alcohol and Drugs Misuse and testing may be found in the Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Guidance for Schools.

16. Work for Other Organisations

- 16.1 Applicants for employment with the Council/Governing Body will be asked to disclose to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, any employment or work in any capacity they may have with other organisations. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal of the offer of appointment, or dismissal if already appointed.
- 16.2 All employees must notify their Headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are undertaking work for another organisation. This includes work in any capacity e.g., contract of employment, consultancy, or contract for services.
- 16.3 Employees should refer to the Government Working Time Regulations that came into effect in 1998, when considering additional appointments or employment.
- 16.4 For a period of 6 months after the termination of employment, former Buckinghamshire Council employees shall not solicit custom, directly or indirectly, from any client of Buckinghamshire Council with whom they have had contact, during the 12 months prior to the termination of employment. For the purposes of this clause, a client is defined as any individual(s), group, or organisation with which you have had contact or correspondence in the course of your employment with Buckinghamshire Council.

17. Raising Concerns – Whistleblowing and Grievances

- 17.1 The Council/Governing Body believes that an employee should report any significant concern they may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of employees, Governors, or others acting on behalf of the school without fear of victimisation.
- 17.2 In the first instance, employee concerns should be raised via the school's internal complaints procedure. Please discuss with the Headteacher
- 17.3 Where concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily through the internal complaints procedure, employees can report unresolved issues under the school's whistleblowing policy.
- 17.4 If an employee has a concern regarding their own employment, they should raise this under the school's grievance policy.

18. Breach of the Code of Conduct

- 18.1 Failure to comply with this guidance and associated school policies may result in an investigation and disciplinary action being taken.
- 18.2 The Council/Governing Body reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the guidance warrant such action.

APPENDIX 1: BC Close personal relationships at work

The Aim is to build an organisation that is committed to maintaining high standards of conduct in close personal relationships at work.

This will be achieved by:

- promoting high standards of conduct and integrity among Council employees
- not interfering unduly in employees' private lives but taking legitimate action when close personal relationships at work have an actual or potential impact on Council services
- managing issues involving close personal relationships at work promptly, effectively, fairly and lawfully
- describing the types of close personal relationship at work that the Council considers inappropriate.

The Expectation is that:-

Heads of Service/School Governing Bodies will:

- delegate authority for managers to take action under this procedure as appropriate
- monitor the use of this procedure for effectiveness and fairness.

Managers will:

- deal promptly and sensitively with issues involving close personal relationships at work
- conduct matters involving close personal relationships at work in an orderly, fair and reasonable way
- maintain confidentiality where possible
- deal with any matter requiring formal disciplinary action using the disciplinary procedure.

Employees will:

- ensure that any close personal relationship at work does not interfere with or prejudice their employment
- if a close personal relationship at work interferes with or prejudices their employment, co-operate under this procedure to resolve the situation.

Appendix 2: Process surrounding Commercial Practices – Gifts, Hospitality, Private Transactions and Transactions between the Employee and the Council

1. Commercial Practices - Gifts

- 1.1 The Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 - 1916 automatically assumes that gifts or considerations are corrupt and where public sector contracts are concerned it is for the individual to prove otherwise.
- 1.2 It is good practice for individuals and managers to keep a simple record of any instances which might later be open to misinterpretation, e.g. the return of an unsolicited gift or offers of excessive hospitality etc.
- 1.3 It should be noted that offers of inducements of gifts include promotions such as:
 - a) competitions where entries are based on the School purchasing items or services as a qualification;
 - b) other free gifts associated with the placing of orders;
 - c) gifts based on attendance at exhibitions or seminars on behalf of the School.

For example, free gifts based on the collection of coupons or vouchers from the packaging of items purchased with Council/School funds would not be acceptable unless the gifts were clearly applicable to the establishment or the Council/School and not the individual.
- 1.4 Although casual gifts offered by contractors or others, for example at Christmas time, may not be in any way connected with the performance of duties so as to constitute any offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts, such offers should be politely but firmly declined and the Headteacher/Chair of Governors informed.
- 1.5 The only gifts which may be accepted are calendars, diaries and other simple items of equipment of modest value, and then only if they bear the company's name or insignia.
- 1.6 In any case of doubt, the Headteacher/Chair of Governors should be informed. In the case of Headteachers/Chair of Governors, the Divisional Manager School Improvement should be notified.

2. Commercial Practices - Hospitality

- 2.1 The utmost discretion should be exercised in accepting offers of hospitality from contractors, potential contractors or their representatives, or from other organisations or individuals involved in commerce.
- 2.2 All hospitality, including reciprocal hospitality, should be such as would be seen to be reasonable and appropriate. Those in contact with contractors and third party

suppliers should not accept hospitality which might later lay them open to allegations of a lack of independence and impartiality.

- 2.3 In all cases of doubt advice should be sought from the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. Where a Headteacher/Chair of Governors is personally involved, he or she should inform the Head of Achievement and Learning.
- 2.4 Headteachers/Chair of Governors should maintain a record of all gifts or hospitality offered to or received by them and their staff. Headteachers/Chair of Governors should register such instances with the Council's Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services.
3. Commercial Practices - Private Transactions and Transactions between the Employee and the Council/School
 - 3.1 Those having official dealings with contractors and other suppliers of goods or services should avoid transacting any kind of private business with them by any means other than normal commercial channels.
 - 3.2 No favour or preference as regards price or otherwise which is not generally available should be sought or accepted. For example, Cash and Carry Cards obtained for use by the School must not be used for private purchases.
 - 3.3 The purchase of goods or services for private purposes through Council/School funds or using official order forms, School headed paper or any other formal Council/School documentation is not acceptable.
 - 3.4 Sales and purchases of goods and services between employees and the Council/School should, as a matter of principle, be avoided.
 - 3.5 If there are special reasons for such a transaction to take place, then the prior approval of the Headteacher/Chair of Governors should be obtained and the Authority's Standing Orders as to Contracts should be adhered to strictly. (insert link)
 - 3.6 In all such cases the Headteacher/Chair of Governors will ensure that the terms of any arrangement are established in open competition and represent the best terms available for the School.
 - 3.7 If it comes to the knowledge of any employee that a contract in which they have any personal or prejudicial interest, whether direct or indirect, has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Council/School, they should, as soon as practicable, give notice in writing to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. Where a Headteacher/Chair of Governors is involved, he or she should inform the Head of Achievement and Learning.
 - 3.8 Employees should declare to their Headteacher/Chair of Governors a potential conflict of interest if they or their spouse are employed by or have a financial

interest (such as directorships or significant share holding) in an organisation having or potentially having a contract with the Council/School.

- 3.9 Where a decision is to be made concerning a purchase or sale of goods and/or services involving an employee, it must be seen to be the case that no favour or advantage accrues to the employee. The individual concerned must take no part in the discussion or decision on the issue.
- 3.10 In certain circumstances employees may be asked to sign a declaration not to disclose information obtained as a result of their employment prior to terminating their employment with the Council/School. This might apply, for example, to an employee previously negotiating a contract with a company they subsequently join.
- 3.11 If an employee is uncertain about a particular circumstance they should seek further advice from their Headteacher/Chair of Governors or Business Manager where appropriate.
- 3.12 A breach of the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889-1916 renders those involved liable to disciplinary action where appropriate and/or possible prosecution and dismissal. A breach of this Code by an employee may also result in disciplinary action being taken including the possibility of dismissal. The School Improvement team must be informed of any suspected breach.