

Primary Learning Trust (PLT)

...where everyone flourishes!



Code Conduct Policy

Primary Learning Trust
Ryders Hayes School
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Mission: to educate all our primary children for life, inspired by expert professionals, in a place *where everyone flourishes!*

Vision

- A family of schools, proud to be working together as one entity, in the right conditions for deep and purposeful **collaboration**
- To **belong** to a great place to learn, work and grow.
- To improve and sustain high educational standards across the Trust, through **evidence-informed** practice.
- To continuously improve teaching and learning, ensuring that every pupil has the best possible education.
- To hold trust on behalf of our children, achieving the best for and from our people, so that everyone can **flourish**.
- To empower our children and our people to create a better future.
- To advance the education system, as part of our civic duty, for the wider public benefit

Values

- **Belonging:** where all our people feel connected, valued, trusted and fulfilled, with a shared purpose to achieve excellence, in a place of psychological safety.
- **Flourishing:** where all our people thrive and continue to grow through the development of their intellectual potential and live well, building strong relationships as well-rounded human beings.
- **Collaboration:** by design, to ensure that all our people are supported and openly share ideas and practice; that no school - no child - is left behind, building together the pipeline that develops the next generation of leaders, global citizens, influencers and innovators.
- **Evidence-informed:** conceptual models of quality and improvement that can be shared and embedded. Deliberate and intentional knowledge-building to create expertise through cultures and communities of improvement, using the active ingredients of professional development.

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with our disciplinary procedure, Teachers' Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 1.2 This Code makes it clear to employees the expectations the Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager/Head of School.
- 1.3 This Code may be amended at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors and volunteers, although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment [see disciplinary procedure].

3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns

- 3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.2 All employees should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- 3.3 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.
- 3.4 All employees must be aware of low level concerns, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:
 - is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
 - does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
or,
- humiliating children.

3.5 To do this, employees must have fully read and understood our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

3.6 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

4 Duty of care

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Ensure that their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

5 Health & Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by the Trust as published in the Staff Handbook
- Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations or instructions and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Trust
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust community or visitors.
- Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

6 Honesty and personal integrity

Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our Trust.

Employees must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by managers or trustees.

Employees uphold public trust in our Trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
- Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- 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
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Employees must treat all colleagues with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy at all times.

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.

7 Tackling discrimination

Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Equality and Diversity Policy and Anti Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.

8 Professional boundaries and relationships

Employees in our Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals. It is a specific offence¹ for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, support staff) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with pupils; students, volunteers (under 18 years of age).

Employees must not make sexual remarks to any pupils or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.

Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any pupil and should not allow pupils to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Pupils are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

¹ Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003

Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with the Head of School immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.

For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the Trust we expect that they will identify this to the Head of School and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Where an employee has managerial authority over another employee with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the Trust reserves the right to transfer one or both employees to another role in the Trust following appropriate consultation with both employees in order to seek agreement to the transfer.

9 Confidentiality and data protection

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a pupils' home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.

If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to The Head of School.

We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems as set out in our Data Protection Policy. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Officer, in order (where applicable) for relevant breaches to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours.

- 9.4 Employees must read and understand our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies including in relation to criminal records information, recruitment and safer recruitment, internet, email and communications, information security, references to which are contained in the staff handbook and available in the Staffroom and on the Staff Shared Drive.

10 Physical contact with students

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the pupil's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.

There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to their line manager/Head of School.

Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

11 Behaviour management

- 1.1 Employees should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is completely unacceptable.
- 1.2 Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, employees should follow the School's Behaviour for Learning Policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

12 Social contact with pupils and their families

- 12.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with pupils for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. It is strongly recommended that staff at Primary Learning Trust, (especially those who are also parents) do not engage in, or comment upon, any communications relating to school via social media with other parents, to protect themselves and the school.
- 12.2 Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about our schools/Trust, our students or their parents or carers; our Trustees or staff; suppliers and vendors; and other affiliates and stakeholders. Staff should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our School / Trust's reputation, even indirectly.
- 12.3. If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our School / Trust or our stakeholders, you should print out the content and contact [the Head of School. All staff are responsible for protecting our School and Trust's reputation.
- 12.4 Employees should read and understand our Social Media/Acceptable User Policy.

13 Photography, videos and other images/media

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should employees use their personal equipment to take images of students at or on behalf of the school/Trust.

14. Acceptable Use of Technology

Staff should only use ICT systems and resources (email and phone) for all school/Trust business or only in line with what is allowed. Employees should read and understand our Acceptable User Policy.

15 Personal Phones and Tablets

15.1 Staff must not use personal electronic communication devices such as mobile phones or iPads as cameras in school. Any photographs/video footage must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school IT hardware/computers.

15.2 Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use personal mobile phones in school during their directed/paid hours of employment unless there are exceptional circumstances and they have requested and been given explicit permission to do so by the principal/ headteacher. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.

16. Alcohol and Substance Misuse

16.1 Staff are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out their job and to be able to perform their duties safely without any limitations due to the use or after effects of alcohol or drugs. In this policy drug use includes the use of controlled drugs, psychoactive (or mind-altering) substances formerly known as "legal highs", and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

16.2 Alcohol and drug-related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. Therefore the Trust will seek, where appropriate, to treat these problems in a similar way to other health issues. Support may be provided at this point, in order to aid a full recovery, allowing a return to work/effective performance and the full range of duties.

16.3 Employees should read and understand our substance and misuse policy.

17. Working one to one with pupils

There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a pupil and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school

- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand
- Reports to their line manager if the pupil becomes distressed or angry.

18. Curriculum

- 18.1 Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with students to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. Health and Social Care, PSHE, Drama.
- 18.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and employees should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

19 Dress and appearance

- 19.1 The academy has a dress code and you should read and adhere to this (see Staff Handbook).
- 19.2 Working in our school, employees are role models to our children and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any time. Appropriate and practical footwear should be worn (no trainers except for PE). For the teaching of PE, the PE school polo shirt provided must be worn with plain joggers or PE shorts (but no leggings/gym-wear) and no jewellery. Staff can wear their 'PE kit' for the morning or afternoon session, but should be professionally dressed for the remainder of the day (unless leading after-school sessions or taking children to sporting competitions).
- Piercings: No jewellery should be worn in visible piercings other than suitable earrings (single only). Visible tattoos should be covered.
- 19.3 If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed.

20 Gifts and hospitality

- 20.1 For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept

bribes. Therefore, any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for the school that exceeds a nominal value of £15.00 must be declared to the Head of School and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

- 20.2 It is traditional for pupils and their parents or carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from pupils and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value of greater than £15.00 should inform the Head of School who will then decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make their line manager aware of any pupil who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any pupil or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.
- 20.3 Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy. The exception to this would be a token gift given to the whole class at particular times of the year e.g. Christmas, at the teacher's discretion.

21. Keeping within the law

- 21.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.
- 21.2 Employees must ensure that they:
- Uphold the law at work
 - Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the school/Trust, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
 - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
 - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
 - Write and tell the Head of School (Executive Head Teacher if they are the Head of School) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Academy (this includes outside of their working hours). The Executive Head Teacher/ Head of School and trustees will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the Trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

22. Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

- 22.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.
- 22.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the school or affect the school's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.
- 22.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the school at the earliest opportunity.
- 22.4 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

23 Review

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended 3 yearly by the Trust. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Trust Board.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Trust Board on:

It is due for review on:

Signature:

Head of School:

Date: