

ULT Staff Code of Conduct



UTTOXETER
LEARNING TRUST
INSPIRED TEACHING
INSPIRING CHILDREN

Due for review: Autumn 2024

Code of Conduct for Staff Employed in the Uttoxeter Learning Trust

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1. Aims, Scope and Principles:

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. The Uttoxeter Learning Trust expects high standards of conduct from all employees. This Code of Conduct (the Code) outlines the rules that apply to all staff employed in the Uttoxeter Learning Trust and provides guidance to help keep to them and ensure the highest standards of conduct. The Code sets out the minimum standards that are expected of employees and provides a framework that will help to prevent misunderstandings or criticism.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our Trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards 2011. School staff have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all support staff, governors, trustees and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Employees within the Faith Schools within the Trust should also perform their duties in line with the distinct Christian ethos of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

The Uttoxeter Learning Trust endorses the following principles:

Selflessness

Employees should take decisions by thinking only of the public interest within the Uttoxeter Learning Trust. They should not do so in order to gain any benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Employees should not put themselves under any financial or other obligation to any outside person or organisation that might influence them inappropriately in their work. Employees should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Employees must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence available and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Employees are accountable to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust for their decisions and actions and should be open to whatever questioning is appropriate to their role.

Openness

Employees should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Furthermore, employees should be prepared to give reasons for the decisions and actions they take. They should restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly requires this.

Honesty

Employees should carry out their duties honestly and have a duty to declare any private interests to do with their role in the Uttoxeter Learning Trust. They must resolve any possible conflicts of interest in a way which protects the interests of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

Leadership

Employees should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Uttoxeter Learning Trust also expects employees to operate in accordance with the Codes of Conduct provided by their relevant professional bodies.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust and its pupils.

2. Legislation and Guidance / General Obligations:

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association. Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality;
- never use inappropriate or offensive language in school;
- treat pupils and others with dignity and respect;
- show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- express personal beliefs or political views in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;
- understand the statutory frameworks they must act within;
- adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

Local Governing Board: The local governing board has a general role in ensuring that appropriate standards of conduct are established and maintained. Members of the local governing board may also be involved in dealing with specific declarations made by employees under the Code, where appropriate.

Headteacher: The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are made aware of the Code as part of their induction programme. They may also consider declarations made by employees under the Code and will ensure appropriate action is taken to deal with any alleged breaches.

CEO: The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the code of conduct is updated on an annual basis and will ensure that a consistent approach is taken across the Trust.

Employees: All staff employed by the Uttoxeter Learning Trust are required to keep to the standards of the Code and carry out their duties honestly and fairly. Failure to do so is a serious matter and could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. Employees should therefore ensure that they read the Code carefully and contact their immediate line manager or the headteacher if they have any queries.

4. Safeguarding:

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect. Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the school / Trust website and from the school office. New staff will also be given copies on arrival. All employees of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust are required to work within the 'Keeping children safe in education September 2023' provided by the DfE and any additional guidance provided by the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

Where a person age 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Where a person is aged over 18 and in a position of trust tries to establish a relationship with someone who has recently left school this will cause concern and will be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship.

Reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns is also covered by the school safeguarding policy and the ULT Whistle-blowing policy

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A ‘case manager’ will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can’t easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available in the staff room and from the school office, as well as in the policies section of the school website.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff’s health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement



Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

The staff member should raise their concern with the headteacher or if the complaint is about the headteacher, with the CEO or if about the CEO, with the Chair of Trustees. If the complaint is about the Governing body/ Board of trustees, it should be raised with the Chair of the ULT (or, if this is felt inappropriate, with the most relevant of the external bodies identified in section 7 of the Whistle-blowing policy).

Concerns should be made in writing and wherever possible, using appendix 1 of the Whistle-blowing policy . They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to the Trust whistle-blowing policy.

5. Staff/Pupil Relationships:

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- this takes place in a public place that others can access;
- others can see in to the room;
- a colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours unless a planned event such as an authorised school trip or visit. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes personal social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable. Instead the contribution of pupils should be recognised in line with the school's policy on rewards or an additional award agreed with senior staff in the school.

Pupils are entitled to privacy and respect in changing rooms although there does need to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard pupils and satisfy health and safety requirements and to ensure bullying doesn't occur. Staff in these circumstances need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils.

Staff should follow the school's physical intervention policy and receive guidance and training from the leadership team or qualified professional. Physical contact with a student may be required to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist with an exercise and physical intervention is required as part of a formally agreed plan (e.g. a child with SEN or physical disabilities). In circumstances such as these the contact should be subject to an agreed plan which is subject to review, and with the student's agreement, taking the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and in an open environment.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the headteacher.

6. Communication and Social Media:

Trust staff's personal social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private. Staff may have professional social media sites such as LinkedIn where it is understood that they will use their personal and therefore professional name.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. Staff should be cautious in their contact with ex-pupils, as there is still a professional relationship and there may be contact with current pupils. Staff should also be cautious in their contact with friends or relatives who are also employed at the school or have a child/children at the school.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff must not post anything on social media sites which could bring the Trust or school into disrepute. Staff must not express opinions on the Trust or school's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Headteacher. Staff may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.

7. Acceptable use of Technology:

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

Staff should be aware of the Trust's online-safety policy including the acceptable use agreement for staff.

The Trust has the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

8. Confidentiality:

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information will never be:

- disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority;
- used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others;
- used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm or disclosures through the whistle-blowing policy.

9. Honesty, Integrity and Duty of Care:

A duty of care is exercised through the caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff is demonstrated through integrity, maturity and good judgement. When accepting a role with children and young people staff need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent with the role. Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, managing risk, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities. Staff at all times should avoid behaviour which may be misinterpreted by others and report and record any incident with this potential.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register as outlined in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

Employers also have a duty of care towards their employees which requires them to create a safe environment in which they work. All members of the local community, parents, carers and employees have a right to be treated fairly and equally. Employees must follow the Uttoxeter Learning Trust's policies on equal opportunities, in addition to the requirements of the law.

10. Dress Code:

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require pupils to be smart in their uniform. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for staff. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. For example, outfits will not be overly revealing and clothing should not display any offensive or political slogans.

11. Conduct Outside of Work:

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Trust, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence as well as negative comments about the Trust on social media.

Employees' off-duty hours are their private concern as long as they do not:

- put their private interests before their duty to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust;
- put themselves in a position where their duty to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust and private interests' conflict or could appear to conflict;
- do anything which could adversely affect their suitability to carry out their duties or the reputation of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

Full-time teaching staff and support staff graded above Scale 6 (or its equivalent) may not carry out any other business or take up any additional employment without the permission of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust. Part-time staff should still inform the Headteacher of additional employment commitments. Employees should complete the appropriate form and submit it to the Headteacher. The Trust will not unreasonably prevent employees from carrying out other employment. However, this employment must not, in the view of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust, conflict with its interests and specific conditions may be set out to manage this.

The following conditions apply to all work commitments outside of their Uttoxeter Learning Trust contract:

- employees must not carry out private work (whether paid or unpaid) relating to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust without disclosing this to the headteacher;
- employees must not carry out any work related to a private interest (including taking or making telephone calls) during normal working hours;
- employees must be mindful of the Working Time Regulations 1998 with regards to additional hours worked and not give the Uttoxeter Learning Trust cause for concern relating to health and safety at work;
- the outside work must not damage or potentially damage public confidence in the Uttoxeter Learning Trust's conduct or business;

- an employee must not use the Uttoxeter Learning Trust's facilities, equipment or confidential information;
- all approvals will be reviewed regularly and may be withdrawn if thought necessary.

Some staff, particularly teachers, may wish to use their professional expertise to do other work, for example examination marking or private tuition. It is recognised that this can be of value to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust. The Uttoxeter Learning Trust will not normally prevent employees from undertaking additional employment if it is satisfied that it does not conflict with the interests of or weaken public confidence in Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

The provisions of this section are not intended to apply to trade union officers engaged in legitimate trade union duties and activities.

12. Transporting Pupils and Extra Curricular Activities:

In certain circumstances staff or volunteers may agree to transport pupils. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties which may arise.

Where possible transportation should not take place in private vehicles and at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort. Parent / Carer consent must be obtained. In an emergency and or exceptional circumstances the transport arrangement must be risk assessed by the Headteacher. The driver must have the appropriate business insurance and ensure that the vehicle meets all other legal requirements. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy / meets all other legal requirements, is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in a less formal environment such as on a residential or after school activity. Staff must remember they are still in a position of trust and should ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted as trying to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. Alcohol should not be consumed by staff when in position of trust for example when on a school trip or visit. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

13. Disclosure of Information:

The Uttoxeter Learning Trust recognises the importance of an open and transparent culture with clear communication and accountability. The law requires that certain types of information must be open to governors, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. An employee should always check first with the

headteacher if they are in any doubt as to whether the particular information should be released. The headteacher may seek advice from the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

Employees must not use any information they obtain in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit. In addition, employees must not pass information on to others who might use it for their own personal gain.

Employees must only give confidential information or documents to those who have a legitimate right to them. They can only give out information in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Please refer to the schools own GDPR Policy for further information.

Information given to employees in the course of their duties should be accurate and fair and not designed to mislead. If an employee believes that information should be disclosed in the public interest, they should follow the Uttoxeter Learning Trust's Whistleblowing Policy. A failure to follow such may result in disciplinary action.

Employees other than the headteacher should not make statements directly to the press or other media without first obtaining the approval of the governing board, except in the case of trade union representatives who are communicating with the media in that role. Headteachers should consult with the CEO before making statements to the press or other media on major policy issues.

14. Use of Financial Resources:

Employees involved in financial activities and transactions must follow the Uttoxeter Learning Trust's Financial regulations and guidance and the Academies Financial Handbook September 2020. Employees should act fairly and impartially when dealing with tenders, contractors and sub-contractors in accordance with the Procurement and Tendering Policy. Staff must be aware of what constitutes acceptable gifts and hospitality, and the process that must be followed in accordance with the gifts and hospitality policy.

Employees must use public funds in a responsible and legal way, try to make sure that the Uttoxeter Learning Trust provides value for money to the local community and avoid legal challenges to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

15. Retention and Access to Declarations:

Declarations made on appropriate forms are subject to the retention periods and access categories set out below:

Declaration	Retention	Access
Relationship with external contractor or supplier	Kept for 3 years after the end of employment	Public access
Relationship with candidate for employment	Kept for 3 years	Internal access

Approval for outside interests	Kept for 3 years after end of employment	Internal access
Declaration of personal interests	Kept for 3 years after end of employment	Internal access
Financial interest in contract	Kept indefinitely	Public access
Membership of secret societies or organisations	Kept for 3 years after end of employment	Access controlled by monitoring officer
Offers of gifts	Kept for 3 years	Internal access
Offers of hospitality	Kept for 3 years	Internal access

Public access is allowed in situations that can raise particular public concerns (since they relate to financial interests) and the public interest in being able to see that appropriate declarations are made and the extent to which employees have such relationships overrides the need to protect the personal privacy of employees.

Internal access by governors, trustees, or district audit, concerns declarations that relate primarily to the personal interests of an employee. This is to maintain a balance between public interest and privacy issues.

16. Links with other Policies:

This policy links with our policies and statutory guidance:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Physical intervention
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online-safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medication
- Financial Regulations
- Procurement and Tendering
- The Academies Financial Handbook
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Minibus policy

17. Monitoring Arrangements:

This policy will be reviewed every year, but can be revised as needed.

Appendices:

Annex A - Section 117 of Local Government Act 1972

If it an employee becomes aware that they have a direct or indirect financial interest in a contract which the Uttoxeter Learning Trust has entered into or intends to enter into, they must declare this immediately.

An employee must not accept any fee or reward other than their normal salary.

If an employee breaks either of the conditions shown above, they can be prosecuted and fined. The maximum fine is Level 4 on the Standard Scale.

Annex B - Organisations to which rules about personal interests apply.

Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting, which:

- is not open to members of the public who are not members of that group;
- includes an obligation on the part of the member to make a commitment of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society or gathering or meeting; and
- includes a commitment of secrecy about the rules, membership or conduct of the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting.

Freemasons are considered to come within this definition.

A lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting is not to be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of a generally recognised religion.

Annex C – Local Government Competition Regulations

The following summarises some of the key principles to be observed:

All employees should:

- avoid acting in a way which restricts or prevents competition or is likely to have that effect;
- do nothing that would distort or inhibit competition;
- treat outside bidders or contractors equally with the authority's direct service organisation. For example, information given to the direct service organisation about the work which is subject to competition must be made available to all bidders.

Annex D - Prevention of Corruption Acts 1906 and 1916

Under the Prevention and Corruption Acts 1906 and 1916 it is an offence for employees to accept any gifts or other benefits for:

- doing, or not doing, anything in their official capacity;
- showing favour or disfavour to any person in their official capacity.

Under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1916 any money, gift or consideration received by an employee from a person or organisation holding or trying to get a contract will be treated as corrupt unless the employee proves differently.

Declaration Form

..... **SCHOOL/ACADEMY**