

Code of Conduct for Sapientia Education Trust (SET) staff and volunteers

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Introduction

1. The Code of Conduct is intended as a guide to all Trust staff, contractors and volunteers. The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of conduct expected when within, or representing, the Trust. This Code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff. It is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary.
2. SET is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, contractors and volunteers to share this commitment.
3. For ease of expression, the Code of Conduct uses the term “member of staff” to indicate all who work within the Trust, either on a paid or voluntary basis. For clarification, the Code of Conduct applies to:
 - a. All employed members of staff;
 - b. All volunteers supporting the work of the SET, whether appointed directly or via a third party; and
 - c. All contractors and/or employees of contractors, including agency workers.
4. SET Trustees and School Governors should refer to the Code of Conduct for Governors.
5. It takes in the requirements of the law and defines the required levels of professionalism to ensure the wellbeing of the School and its pupils.
6. This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgment and act in the best interests of pupils/students and the SET.
7. Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in action being taken under the SET disciplinary procedure, including, but not limited to, dismissal.
8. This policy should be read in conjunction with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018’, ‘Teacher’s Standards’ and ‘Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education 2015’.

Specific Aspects

9. Discrimination, harassment and bullying: Staff must at all times adhere to the SET Dignity at Work policy and treat pupils, parents and members of staff as well as external stakeholders in accordance with this policy.
10. Health and Safety: Staff must take care of their personal hygiene, safety and welfare, and that of other persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions. All staff must comply with the SET Health and Safety policy, local Health and Safety policies and relevant legislation and regulations.
11. Business Practice: Staff must maintain an impeccable standard of integrity in all of their professional relationships.
12. Media: Other than on matters of publicity, only the Headteacher of the school or SET CEO is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the school to members of the press or broadcast media.
13. Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018: It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure SET is compliant with the DPA and GDPR. Please see the Data Protection Policy and local school Data Protection policies for further details.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

14. Members of staff have a duty of care to all pupils and students within SET and must act at all times in a manner which safeguards and promotes their physical, emotional and moral welfare.
15. All members of staff must be familiar with and act in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Prevent Duty Guidance 2015 and Guidance for Safer Working Practice For Those Working With Children and Young People in Education Settings 2015.
16. Members of staff must not seek physical, emotional or sexual gratification from their relationships with pupils or students nor give the impression that they may be doing so. Staff must exercise care in using language or exhibiting behaviour which may be misconstrued as inappropriate and must avoid situations where their integrity may appear compromised.
17. Members of staff must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an

open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Members of staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

18. Physical contact with students must be kept to a minimum and must only take place where it is necessary in the discharge of the duties of a member of staff. Except in cases of emergency, the reason for physical contact should be explained to pupils and students before it takes place and consent should be obtained.
19. Law forbids physical punishment of students. Minimum necessary force may be used in a situation to protect a student, member of staff or any other person from physical harm. Any incident where force has been used must be reported in full to the Headteacher as soon as reasonably possible.
20. Any member of staff who believes that a student may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse (whether by an adult or child) or of neglect has a legal duty to report the matter to the School's safeguarding team. For this reason, members of staff should not give assurances of confidentiality when counselling students.
21. These provisions apply equally in the case of all students whether or not they are legally adults. They also apply in any situation where a member of staff may be working with vulnerable adults.
22. It is not unusual for students or sometimes parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher.
23. Staff should be mindful of S16 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. a teacher) 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.

Professional Conduct

24. Members of staff must understand and comply with the "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in an Educational Setting".
25. Teachers are required to comply with the Teachers Standards 2012, in particular Part 2 on Personal and Professional Standards.



26. Members of staff must discharge their duties to the best of their abilities and using their best endeavours, remembering that the interests of students are paramount. Members of staff must cooperate with colleagues and other individuals as required as well as contributing to the creation of a pleasant and productive working environment. Bullying, harassment or discrimination of any nature is entirely unacceptable.
27. Members of staff must not demean or undermine students, their parents, carers or colleagues, or act towards them in a way that could be construed as discriminatory in relation to any protected characteristic: sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, religion or belief, race, age or disability.
28. Members of staff must comply with relevant statutory provisions and other instructions that support the wellbeing and development of students, including where these require cooperation and collaboration with outside agencies. They must comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of achievement and attainment.
29. Members of staff must be prepared to undertake training and other professional development opportunities as appropriate within their normal contracted hours of work.
30. Members of staff must adopt appropriate, conservative, professional dress during the school day and set a good example to students concerning behaviour and appearance at all times.
31. All schools within SET are non-smoking sites and therefore smoking is entirely prohibited. While at work, members of staff should never smoke where students may see them. This includes the use of e-cigarettes (or other nicotine substitute products).
32. Staff who are on duty are not permitted to drink alcohol.
33. Staff who attend work-related social events such as Christmas parties are still representing the Trust and must behave in a mature, appropriate and responsible manner. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action taken against the employee.
34. Any use or possession of illegal drugs or substances or Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS or “legal highs”) by staff is entirely prohibited on any School premises.



35. Where members of staff are provided with residential accommodation for the better performance of their duties, they must ensure that the accommodation is maintained in a clean and presentable condition and that the provisions of their licence with SET is observed, in accordance with the licence agreement.
36. Volunteers and adults who are not employed by the Trust, but live in Trust accommodation have no rights of discipline relating to students and should refer any concerns to the Headteacher.
37. Members of staff should be aware of the requirement to restrict social interaction with any students (including via social media) and ensure that any social contact with students outside of the Trust is conducted within professional boundaries and is open and transparent. This applies also to ex-students.

Information and Communication Technology

38. ICT facilities are provided for the better performance of the duties of members of staff. They may also be used for personal purposes (in line with the ICT staff code of conduct) provided that such use does not involve SET in any additional cost, compromise the integrity of SET systems, impede their efficient operation or interfere with the proper performance of duties of the member of staff.
39. Members of staff must observe professional propriety in using electronic means of communication, whether or not provided by the School. In particular, they must not access pornographic or otherwise inappropriate material from the internet.
40. The Headteacher may authorise the monitoring of ICT facilities used by staff to detect misuse or malpractice.

Social Media

41. Members of staff must not interact with students via social media, including ex-students. Members of staff must also not encourage or initiate social contact with pupils or students once the member of staff has ceased working at SET.
42. If a member of staff's use of social media is considered to be derogatory, discriminatory, bullying, threatening, defamatory, offensive, intimidating, harassing, brings SET into disrepute or breaches the Dignity at Work policy then SET may take action under the Disciplinary procedure.
43. SET may require members of staff to remove social media posts that are deemed to constitute a breach of these standards and failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

44. Members of staff are responsible for their words and actions in an online environment and therefore are advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they post on social media is something that they would want students, colleagues, their manager or people outside of SET to read.

Transporting Pupils

45. In certain situations, e.g. out of school activities, adults may agree to transport students. Transport arrangements should be made in advance by a designated employee who will be responsible for planning and overseeing all transport arrangements and respond to any concerns that may arise. Wherever possible and practicable, transport should be provided other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as escort.
46. It is inappropriate for a member of staff to offer a lift to a student unless this has been agreed with the Headteacher, and if this falls outside of normal working duties, has been agreed with parents/carers. There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and parents/carers.

Financial Probity

47. Members of staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including the use of SET property and finance.
48. Members of staff must not hold monies belonging to SET, students or parents in their own bank accounts at any time or for any reason without express permission from the COO.
49. Members of staff must not use SET resources for their own benefit nor derive personal pecuniary benefit, unless they have received prior agreement from the Headteacher.
50. Members of staff making decisions concerning the procurement of goods or services must declare any conflict of interest that may arise.

Confidentiality

51. Members of staff shall maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to both students and staff sensitive matters.
52. Members of staff must not act in a way that is likely to bring SET into disrepute. Members of staff are reminded that they have a duty of confidentiality to SET as their employer and they must therefore not divulge information concerning SET or any student to any third party, except in relation to their professional duties.

Conviction of a Criminal Offence

53. A member of staff who is convicted of a criminal offence, or has accepted a caution in respect of an offence must report this to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide whether the severity and nature of the offence is such as to compromise the role of the member of staff, in which case an investigation may be carried out in line with the disciplinary policy.

Whistleblowing

54. A member of staff who believes that criminal activity or wrongdoing of any other serious kind is taking place within SET must report the matter to their line manager, Headteacher or external agency. In doing so, they are protected from recrimination by the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

Teachers' Standards and Other Professional Bodies

55. The conduct of Teachers is regulated by the "Teachers Standards" document published by the Department of Education, which has been incorporated into the SET Performance Management Policy.

56. Some members of support staff will also be subject to codes of conduct relating to their membership of professional bodies, which they are expected to comply with.