



Central Region
Schools Trust

Founded by the RSA

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Recommended by: Trust EP (CEO)

Ratified by: Trust Board

Signed:

**Position on the
Board:**

Chair to Trust board

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**Policy Tier
(Central/Hub/School):** Central

Changes from previous version

Section	Change
2.1.3	Included Safer Working Practice Guidance signpost.
4.4 (sections 4.4.1 – 4.4.8)	Duty to report, record and share concerns including whistleblowing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your new post at the Central Region Schools Trust (the Trust). This guidance is for employees of the Trust whether they have worked in a school for many years or are new to post. Together with your statement of employment particulars and letter of appointment this policy should provide you with most of the information you need relating to your employment; however, please feel free to contact the named person on your appointment letter or your normal HR contact if you have any questions about your terms and conditions.

If you are a teacher your terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with: the Trust's Pay Policy (available from the school intranet/sharing platform), the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (The Burgundy Book).

If you are a member of the support staff your terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with: The Trust's Pay Policy (available from school intranet/sharing platform) and The NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (The Green Book).

Your Principal or Line Manager will provide you with specific induction information about your School/Academy. If you are training and new to teaching, you will also have a professional mentor.

Your employer is the Central Region Schools Trust. The Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day management of your School/Academy, including staffing issues. If there are any issues which the Principal needs to refer to the Local Academy Governing Board during the course of your employment, you will be advised accordingly.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the policies at your School/Academy, please speak to your Principal or Line Manager for further details.

Equality and Diversity

The Trust is committed to preventing and eliminating all forms of unjustifiable and unlawful discrimination, both as an employer and a provider of education, pursuing equality of opportunity for all. We undertake to ensure that everyone has fair access to employment with us and will take all possible steps to help our staff implement this commitment. Every employee has a right to be treated with respect and dignity and if at any time you feel that you have been treated unfairly or harassed you should speak to your Principal/Line Manager or your normal HR contact at the first opportunity. Serious offences such as harassment, if upheld, will be treated as misconduct or gross misconduct. The Trust has its own Equality policy which applies to staff as well as pupils.

2. WORKING FOR THE CENTRAL REGION SCHOOLS TRUST

2.1. Safeguarding, Disclosure and Barring Service and Independent Safeguarding Authority

2.1.1. Safeguarding

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and all staff are expected to share this commitment. You must familiarise yourself with all Trust procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection. Each school/academy has a designated safeguarding lead; please speak to them for further information.

Educational establishments play an important part in the prevention of abuse and neglect, through their own policies and procedures for safeguarding children, creating and maintaining a safe environment, and through the curriculum. They promote resilience in children by helping them to stay safe from harm and encouraging them to talk to someone if they have worries or concerns. Staff members play a crucial role in this process in noticing indications of abuse or neglect and in reporting concerns to Children's Services Social Care. But, in rare circumstances, staff in educational establishments have been found to be responsible for child abuse. Given their daily contact with children in a variety of situations, staff are also vulnerable to accusations of abuse, leading to allegations from children, parents or other staff members. The following documents refer directly to such allegations and how they should be dealt with:

A copy of these policies can be obtained from your Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead or your normal HR contact. It is essential that you familiarise yourself with the guidance in this document.

In addition there is statutory guidance available which is relevant for all staff working with children: Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education

All staff and volunteers working in regulated activity must be given appropriate safeguarding training which is renewed at least annually, which includes safer working practice and management of allegations.

The designated child protection lead should have their training updated every two years.

2.1.2. Disclosure and Barring Service

All staff in Academies must have provided the school with a current DBS certificate (previously CRB) before taking up their post. Any convictions, cautions or other information on the disclosure will have been fully risk assessed and employees with convictions or cautions will only be permitted to take up post with the express authority of the Trust Board.

You must immediately inform your Principal if, during the course of your employment, you are subject to any allegations of a criminal nature, any criminal proceedings, convictions or cautions in order that this risk assessment can be undertaken. All Trust staff will be required to complete an annual declaration which covers the above and disqualification by association. Not all convictions will automatically exclude you from continuing in your role; however, failure to notify the Principal of any such occurrences may be viewed as a serious breach of conduct and be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

2.1.3 Safer Working Practice

The Central Region Schools Trusts adopts the Safer Recruitment Consortiums "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings". All staff are asked to read this guidance as part of their induction. The guidance is reviewed annually.

2.2. What to do if you are sick

2.2.1. Notification of Sickness Absence

You should familiarise yourself with the procedures operating in your school/academy and follow these at all times.

You, or someone acting on your behalf (in exceptional circumstances), must notify your Principal, or person designated for the purpose, of your absence from work before 7.30am on the first day of your absence, the reason for it and the likely duration. If your absence is for more than one day, you should keep in regular contact with school to advise of your likely return date.

If you return to work before the eighth consecutive day of sickness absence, including weekends, you will need to complete a sickness record form/return to work (self-certification). If you are absent for eight days or more you must provide a medical certificate from your GP to cover all periods of absence thereafter.

2.2.2. GP's Fit Notes

Since April 2010, the medical certification system allows a more proactive approach to managing a return to work. 'Fit Notes' allow for two options: the GP can either state that you are not fit for work or they can state that you may be fit for work taking into account advice on the note, such as amended duties, altered hours, workplace adaptations, etc. There is no longer a 'fit for work' option on the form. If there is a need for amended duties these must be discussed with your line manager before your return.

2.2.3. On Return to Work

You must ensure the Principal is aware that you have returned to work. The Principal or a manager will routinely meet with colleagues returning to work. This meeting often includes completion of a sickness record form.

Please refer to the Managing Sickness Absence Policy for all sick pay.

If you are absent due to illness, the School/Academy has a right to seek further medical information, either through your medical practitioner or through referral to an Occupational Health practitioner, who may ask you to undergo a medical examination and may refuse to allow you to return to work without a satisfactory result of such a referral.

2.3. Working Time and Holidays

2.3.1. Teachers

Your working time is in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, and as directed by your Principal and within your contract of employment.

You may not take holiday during term-time without prior written permission from the Principal.

2.3.2. Support Staff working term-time only

Your working time will be in accordance with your Contract of Employment and as directed by your Principal or Line Manager. (Your salary includes an element of holiday pay pro rata to the annual leave entitlement of a full-time, full year employee.)

You may not take holiday during term-time without prior written permission from the Local Academy Governing Body or in line with any flexible working policy in place if applicable.

2.3.3. Support Staff working 52 weeks

Your working time will be in accordance with your Statement of Employment Particulars, and as directed by your Principal or Line Manager. Your annual leave entitlement can be viewed in your contract of employment and will be pro rata as appropriate for the hours/days working of the role.

Requests for leave must be made to your Principal or Line Manager as far in advance as possible. Reasonable requests will usually be agreed but you must remember that you may be restricted if you seek leave at particularly popular times or when there is a high level of work.

Your annual leave should be taken in the leave year to which it applies, please talk to your normal HR contact to clarify the leave year start and end. However, there are provisions available for you to be able to automatically carry forward up to 5 days leave (pro rata for part-time employees) from one year to the next. Payments in lieu of leave not taken are not made.

2.4. Resignation

If you wish to resign from your post you must give notice in writing to your Principal; the notice periods for your post are detailed in your employment contract.

2.5. Leave of Absence - All Staff

You may from time to time need to ask your Principal for paid or unpaid leave of absence. There are arrangements covering time off for such things as jury service, local councillors, health screening, maternity and paternity leave, etc. These are all detailed within the Special Leave Policy.

2.6. Travel and Subsistence

You may be entitled to travelling and subsistence expenses related to approved journeys. Details are available in your school.

2.7. Trade Unions

You have the right to be a member of any Trade Union or none if you wish. If you are a member you can take part in its activities at appropriate times and seek election to office or hold office in the union.

2.8. Concerns/Grievances

If you have any issues about your employment which are causing you concern, you are advised to raise these directly with your Principal or Line Manager in the first instance. However, you may also seek advice from your union or your normal HR contact.

2.9. Other Policies and Procedures

Up to date and full copies of all policies and procedures for your School/Academy and other information relating to your employment are available on the School/Academy's intranet/sharing platform or, on request from your Principal or from the Trust.

2.10. Pensions

If you require information about your pension including contribution rates, benefit estimates or scheme details please contact the following:

Teachers: The pension scheme for teachers is administered by Teachers' Pensions and many of your questions can be answered through accessing their website at www.teacherspensions.co.uk or telephoning 0345 6066166.

Support Staff: The Local Government Pension Scheme for Worcestershire is administered at County Hall. The Pensions Section can be contacted by telephoning the main County Hall switchboard on 01905 763763. General information about the Local Government Pension Scheme can be found on the website at <https://lgpsmember.org>.

The Local Government Pension Scheme for Wolverhampton is administered at the Mander Centre, by the West Midlands Pension Fund. General information can be found on www.wmpfonline.com or telephone number 0300 111 1665.

2.11. Useful Sources of Information

All pay queries should be referred in the first instance to your normal HR contact. If you are a member of a Trade Union you can also contact your local representative for advice on employment matters.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 3.1. This Code describes the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from our staff and any staff seconded or engaged from other organisations to undertake work within Central Region Schools Trust (The Trust). It also highlights some types of behaviour or conduct which might be considered incompatible with being a Trust employee. It is intended to help you by describing the standards expected of you and has been approved by The Trust. Please take time to read it and ensure your conduct meets these requirements. If you are at all uncertain about what is expected please seek further clarification from your Principal or Line Manager so that you do not unwittingly contravene this Code or otherwise act against the Trust's interests.
- 3.2. Contravening or failing to act within the spirit of the Code or behaving in a manner which could bring the good name of your School/Academy and/or Trust into disrepute, whether or not within the workplace or working time, might be seen as a breach of discipline and could lead to action being taken against you under the appropriate procedure.
- 3.3. While workers who are not employees of the Trust are expected to comply with the spirit of the Code, any action that may be taken in response to a breach will depend on the precise nature of their working relationship with the School/Academy and/or the Trust.

- 3.4. This code relates to all staff working for the Trust. Teachers must be aware that there are also published Teachers' Standards and are advised to familiarise themselves with the requirements of these.

3.5. Guiding principles

- 3.5.1. As a Trust employee, you should put the well-being, development and progress of children and young people first. You should recognise that you are in a position to influence children and young people through your slightest actions, comments or behaviour.
- 3.5.2. To the public you are a representative of the Trust. You are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional competence, knowledge, integrity, confidentiality, financial propriety and personal conduct at all times, this includes your online presence. Contact with all members of the Trust community, including parents and outside visitors, should be courteous, efficient and impartial to all groups and individuals. You must also familiarise yourself with, and adhere to, any rules or codes of conduct or policies relating to the Trust and your role and you should comply with all reasonable requirements or instructions from your Principal and/or line manager.
- 3.5.3. It is not appropriate for you when working within your role as an employee to oppose the stated aims and policies of the School/Academy or the Trust, or to undermine the performance of its duties and responsibilities. It is important for all employees to present a unified image to the public.
- 3.5.4. You should ensure that your relationships with your fellow employees and with pupils are always conducted in a professional and courteous manner; you should not censure other colleagues or criticise their work in the hearing of a pupil or parent/carer. It is not acceptable to use sarcasm or make jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrass or humiliate pupils, or discriminate against or favour pupils. It is also not acceptable to discuss personal or sexual issues with pupils outside of agreed curriculum parameters.
- 3.5.5. It is not acceptable for you to publicly criticise or blame Trust management, colleagues or the Local Academy Governing Body through any medium including internet 'blogs', websites or social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter and you must be aware that the laws governing defamation, breach of copyright, etc. apply equally to 'blogging' as to other forms of communications. Offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and may constitute a disciplinary and/or criminal offence, as could the disclosure/publication of any confidential or personal information about the Trust, its staff, pupils or other members of the Trust community.
- 3.5.6. Any disagreement involving the interpretation or application of the Code as it applies to you should be discussed with the Principal or your Line Manager in the first instance. However, if you feel the Code is being applied unreasonably you may be able to seek redress through the Grievance Procedure.

4. STAFF AND STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- 4.1. You are expected to treat pupils with dignity and fairness, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing the proper boundaries appropriate to a person in a position of trust. You should comply with safe working practices, outlined in the guidance document [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#)
- 4.2. You must not communicate personally with students via your personal email, mobile phone and the internet and then only for school-related matters in line with school policy.
- 4.3. You must not arrange to meet students outside of the school day or off the school site at any time without the express permission of the Principal.

Any physical contact with pupils should be in accordance with any agreed school procedures, such as the intimate care policy or positive physical intervention. Any inappropriate physical contact, such as tickling, rough play, cuddling or sitting a child on your lap may be viewed as misconduct and lead to disciplinary procedures, dependant on circumstances.

4.4 Duty to report concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children.

- 4.4.1. There is a duty to report (including self-reporting) any incident in which an adult has or may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the organisation's staff code of conduct including inappropriate behaviours inside, outside of work or online.
- 4.4.2. Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns regarding behaviour or conduct (including low level concerns) that falls short of the principles outlined in this document. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see KCSiE), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- 4.4.3. Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.
- 4.4.4. Whistleblowing is a mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion in circumstances where their concerns have not been dealt with or they do not feel able to follow usual reporting lines for some reason. Education settings should have a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Staff who use whistle blowing procedures should have their employment rights protected.
- 4.4.5. The NSPCC 'what you can do to report abuse' dedicated helpline is available to all staff as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college.
- 4.4.6. This means that staff should:
 - escalate their concerns if they believe a child or children are not being protected
 - report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern
 - report allegations against staff and volunteers to the Principal, or where they have concerns about the Principal (or their response), report these directly to the CEO.
 - follow the organisation's whistleblowing procedures as appropriate.
 - where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should utilise other whistleblowing channels that are open to them as outlined in KCSiE.
- 4.4.7. Sharing concerns and recording incidents; all staff should be aware of their establishment's safeguarding procedures, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, including agency staff and volunteers, and for reporting low level concerns. In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded and reported to the Principal, or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards pupils, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken.
- 4.4.8. In order to safeguard and protect pupils and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children they should immediately report this to the Principal.

This means that staff should:

- be familiar with their establishment's arrangements for reporting and recording concerns and allegations
- know how to contact the LADO if required
- take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the school or setting

- 4.5 If you find yourself in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others, then you should raise this immediately with the Principal.

5 PERSONAL INTEREST

- 5.1 The interests of the Trust or the way you do your job must not be influenced by personal interests or those of relatives, friends or membership of external organisations or societies. There should be no grounds for suspicion that you are using your position with or knowledge of the Trust for personal gain or that you could be influenced by improper motives. If you belong to outside organisations, including voluntary organisations, there must be no conflict with your job or other Trust interests. You should advise your Principal or Line Manager in writing about anything which could give this impression.
- 5.2 For staff who have responsibility for placing orders and Academy expenditure, please see more detailed guidance in Section 21.

6 PRIVATE WORK

- 6.1 School/Academy/Trust premises, equipment, working time or other resources must not be used to undertake private work.
- 6.2 The School/Academy needs to be aware if its employees undertake private work or voluntary activities in their own time to ensure that there is no conflict of interests with the Trust and to meet its obligations under Health and Safety legislation. Therefore, to protect yourself, the School/Academy, the Local Academy Governing Body and the Trust from potential criticism you should not put yourself in a position where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interests. You should be aware that outside work or activity, whether or not you receive payment, could reduce your ability to safely and effectively carry out your employment with the School/Academy or Trust, e.g. through tiredness, and would be considered unacceptable.
- 6.3 You must advise the Principal before engaging in any other work especially if it could reasonably be seen to conflict with your employment with the Trust or lead to misunderstanding or criticism (for example, private tutoring of students from your School/Academy).
- 6.4 You must not undertake private work for any individual, organisation, department or establishment which otherwise would be undertaken as part of your normal duties. Any charge raised as a result of undertaking work within another establishment should be paid to the School/Academy/Trust.
- 6.5 You must not undertake private work when on sick leave without the express knowledge and prior written approval of your Principal and subject to appropriate medical advice.
- 6.6 During a period of paid leave or suspension, you must not undertake private work within your normal paid working hours and without the prior written approval of your Principal.

7 EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT IRREGULARITIES AND TACKLING MALPRACTICE

- 7.1 If you feel there is something seriously wrong at work please tell an appropriate person as a 'voice of concern'. It might be, for example, the conduct of another employee, the way a contractor is behaving, a work practice, something that is endangering the safety of pupils or staff. You might be the first to notice it and your intervention could stop things getting worse.
- 7.2 No matter how reticent you may feel, you should raise any serious concern (e.g. a suspicion of fraud or corruption or reasonable belief that a child or adult's health, safety or well-being are in danger) with your Principal so that potentially serious problems or malpractice can be addressed without undue delay. If this is not appropriate, then you should contact either the Chair of Governors or the Trust's HR & People Manager. If the matter relates to fraudulent activity, you may inform the Chair of the Audit Committee or the Trust's Chief

Financial Officer (CFO). If you do raise a genuine concern in good faith all reasonable steps will be taken to respect your confidence and protect you from possible reprisals (see the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy).

- 7.3 As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, the Trust seeks to promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the Trust (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. We encourage you to raise with the Principal any occasion where you witness inappropriate conduct inside or outside of work. This includes displaying behaviours such as humiliating children, being over-friendly with children, having favorites, taking photos 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, using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language. Such behaviour is defined in the Trust's Safeguarding Policy as a low-level concern. See the Trust's Safeguarding Policy for further information and guidance.
- 7.4 The Trust take this issue very seriously and will investigate and address any problems genuinely raised. However, any frivolous, malicious or mischievous use of the Confidential Reporting Policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

8 COPYRIGHT

- 8.1 You should be aware that 'intellectual property' such as software, ideas, documents, etc. created during your employment belongs to the Trust. All files, materials, the media upon which they are located and all software programmes or packages which are utilised or developed solely for or in connection with your job remain the property of the Trust.

9 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 The Trust is committed to open government and, in law, certain information must be made available to councillors, government departments, service users and the public. However, you must make sure you know whether information is 'public' or confidential and treat it accordingly.
- 9.2 You may sometimes acquire information at work which has not been made public or is confidential. Examples include information about a pupil or family, a colleague, information on tenders or costs, the proceedings of confidential meetings.
- 9.3 You must ensure that sensitive and/or confidential information is properly secured and safeguarded at all times especially if being transported in paper or electronic formats. Particular care must be taken with information stored on portable electronic media such as laptops and memory devices which are often targeted for theft due to their high intrinsic value. GDPR guidelines must be followed at all times.
- 9.4 Confidential information which comes into your possession must not be used for personal benefit or divulged to other parties except in the proper course of duty, for example to other professionals working with the same child. If you have any doubt whether or not disclosure is appropriate, you must check with your Principal before releasing confidential information.
- 9.5 Some information can be extremely valuable in business and commerce and its publication loss or misuse could seriously disadvantage the Trust and its employees. Therefore, it is important that you do not, deliberately or inadvertently, pass on information, including software, during or after your employment with the Trust, to anyone who has no right to receive it. You must not discuss, disclose, publicise or use such information for your own or anyone else's personal interest or advantage.
- 9.6 You must decline any approaches or offers made asking for information which could be detrimental to, or help others to gain a contract, grant or any other advantage from the School/Academy or Local Academy Governing Body and/or its employees, e.g. a potential contractor could offer a financial reward for information leading to the award of a major contract. Approaches or offers of this kind must be declared to your Principal without delay.

- 9.7 You must not criticise the Trust, any of its Schools/Academies, its policies or staff in open media such as internet 'blogs', websites, social networking sites, etc. where it may be seen by parents, children or others in the school community.

10 CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

- 10.1 Unless you are properly authorised to speak with, write or give interviews to the media you should refer any enquiries from the media on work related matters to your Principal.

11 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DATA PROTECTION

Also see staff Acceptable Use Policy.

- 11.1 Everyone using computing equipment has a duty of care to use it according to prescribed arrangements, e.g. to avoid introducing computer viruses, to comply with the Data Protection Act, and to safeguard and ensure the security of information.
- 11.2 You must familiarise yourself with the School/Academy's ICT policies, including use of the internet. In particular, all use of the internet and email facilities must be authorised, legal, appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of the Trust's policies. Personal use of any facilities, including laptops, must be authorised and only undertaken at times deemed appropriate by the Principal.

Users shall not use the internet or email for the following:

- to knowingly break the law
- to fail to comply with existing Trust/School/Academy policy
- to compromise the integrity of any network or system
- to access, display or transmit any kind of sexually explicit material or any offensive or discriminatory material of any kind
- to make unauthorised contact with outside bodies
- to download software or play games
- to bet or gamble
- to disclose private or confidential information.

Failure to comply with the policies in force or any unauthorised use of such facilities will be dealt with in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedure. Employees should also take account of policies on cyberbullying.

- 11.3 Employees should also be aware when they are using personal IT equipment for undertaking school related business that the same rules apply. Please refer to your School/Academy's full policy on appropriate use of IT.
- 11.4 Employees must not photograph pupils using their own photographic equipment or mobile phone.
- 11.5 Employees should not use social media in any way that might bring their professional status or their School/Academy or Trust into disrepute or undermine the policies or ethos of the School/Academy and Trust.
- 11.6 Employees must not share confidential information of specific students or members of staff mentioned on a social media site. You must not accept pupils as 'friends' or 'followers' and should not 'follow' or have any personal connections with pupils on any social media or other internet sites. If you are a 'friend' of a parent of a pupil at your school because of family or other strong connection, you should seek written permission for this from the Principal, and you should be particularly careful not to share information about pupils, staff or working practices. You should ensure that full privacy settings are applied to all your social media accounts.

12 GIFTS, INDUCEMENTS, HOSPITALITY AND SPONSORSHIP

- 12.1 You must not accept any commission, discount, allowance, direct or indirect profit, inducement, payment, perk or benefit in connection with any professional work undertaken, other than any fee recoverable on behalf of the School/Academy or Trust
- 12.2 Minor gifts and hospitality are sometimes part of the normal courtesies of life: the parent of a pupil may offer a modest gift, especially at Christmas or as a token of appreciation, and in an office situation simple items such as diaries and calendars are often distributed as advertising matter. As a guideline, any gift or hospitality with a value of £25.00 or more is highly unlikely to be viewed as a 'token'. With the exception of these 'tokens' and any special schemes (e.g. travel or discount schemes) arranged by the Trust or School/Academy, all gifts, vouchers, fees, special discounts, rewards or preferential treatment must be refused. In situations where refusal is difficult or might offend you must inform your Principal or Line Manager who will decide on the appropriate action.
- 12.3 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor any activity or make a donation to the School/Academy, the basic principles relating to personal interests and the acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.
- 12.4 You must not give gifts to particular pupils other than as part of an agreed reward strategy or given to all pupils equally, with the knowledge and permission of your Principal or Line Manager.

13 TRANSPORTING PUPILS

- 13.1 Any School/Academy policy on transporting pupils should be adhered to at all times. Circumstances where it is appropriate to transport pupils, e.g. for sports matches, should always take place with the full knowledge and consent of the Principal and the pupils' parents/carers.
- 13.2 Any legal requirements must be adhered to, such as ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy, business insurance is in place, seat belts are worn, car seats are used for younger children and the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 13.3 Wherever possible, there should always be at least one adult additional to the driver as an escort and children should be seated in the back of the vehicle.
- 13.4 It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to pupils outside their normal working duties, unless this has been previously arranged with the parent/carer and the Principal is aware of the arrangement.

14 OVERSEAS TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

- 14.1 Any proposal to travel overseas on official business must be approved by the Trust before the travel takes place.

15 EQUALITY ISSUES

- 15.1 All members of the community, including pupils, families and other employees have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity. You must make yourself aware of and comply with the School/Academy/Trust's Equality and Diversity Policies and procedures.

16 STANDARDS OF APPEARANCE

- 16.1 The Trust expects staff to wear smart and/or tailored workwear, to present a reasonable and professional appearance and to dress appropriately to the circumstances within their working environment, bearing in mind that you are working with children and young people. Dress should not be offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and should not display political or other contentious slogans. We expect tattoos to be covered where possible and for hair colour to look professional and close to natural colours.
- 16.2 Where uniform or protective clothing is issued it must be worn as required when at work or representing the School/Academy/Trust. When wearing uniform or other items which identify you as an employee of the Trust

you must maintain appropriate standards of conduct whether or not on duty, e.g. when travelling to and from work.

- 16.3 Staff wearing identity badges should wear the **Central Region Schools Trust** lanyards.

17 RELATIVES AND CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

- 17.1 In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias you should endeavour not to be directly involved in the appointment, promotion, discipline or other employment decision relating to another employee to whom you are related or with whom you have a close personal relationship. If a situation arises in which you feel you may be in such a position, please seek the advice of your Principal or the Trust's HR & People Manager.
- 17.2 If you work in close proximity with other employees or pupils to whom you are related or have a close personal connection you must maintain a strictly professional relationship at work. You should also be aware that if any relationship leads to disruption in the workplace, unacceptable conduct or performance or situations involving undue favouritism or detriment, action will be taken under the appropriate procedure.

18 SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT

- 18.1 All Trust buildings, workplaces and vehicles are smoke free areas. Since July 2007, it has been against the law to smoke in workplaces; failure to comply is now a criminal offence.

19 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- 19.1 Employees must not take drugs, alcohol or any other substance before work, during a break or at lunch time that is capable of causing their behaviour, judgement or performance at work to be affected. This is particularly important for employees who drive, operate machinery, have responsibility for vulnerable adults or children, and who come into contact with members of the public and/or visitors. (N.B. It is equally inappropriate for those working in close proximity to service users such as children and vulnerable adults to have alcohol on their breath even though this may not amount to drunkenness.)

20 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 20.1 Unsafe working can endanger you, your colleagues and members of the public. You must familiarise yourself with the School/Academy/Trusts Health and Safety Policy and guidelines for your particular work. Please speak to your Principal for further information. You must follow the rules, codes and safe practices they describe including reporting any accidents, incidents or near misses you have at work.

21 SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPENDITURE

21.1 Personal interests

- 21.1.1 The interests of the Trust must not be undermined by personal interests. The way you do your job must not be influenced by personal interests or those of relatives, friends or membership of external organisations or societies. There should be no grounds for suspicion that you are using your position with or knowledge of the Trust for personal gain or that you could be influenced by improper motives. If you belong to outside organisations, including voluntary organisations, there must be no conflict with your job or other Trust interests.
- 21.1.2 All orders, contracts and grants must be awarded on merit following fair competition. No favour should be shown because of personal interests and no part of the community should be discriminated against.

21.1.3 You must advise your Line Manager in writing about anything which could give the impression that you may be acting for personal gain, financial or otherwise, or in the interests of another person or organisation; or you are involved as an employee in matters which might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, your spouse, partner, relative, a close friend or any person with whom you have a close association, e.g. if any of those persons:

- hold an office or employment with, OR
- have any connection or influence with, OR
- have any financial interest in any company or organisation doing or seeking to do business with, or requesting grants or other funding from the Trust.

21.1.4 You should avoid being involved as an employee in matters which might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself (or the persons, companies or organisations referred to above) so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the school or public interest. (N.B. Holding shares in a company with which you know the Trust is likely to be dealing, or acting as an agent for them, could be regarded as a financial interest.)

21.1.5 You must advise your Principal or Line Manager who will notify the Trust in writing of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract or proposed contract with the county council as soon as practicable after becoming aware of it so that it can be recorded in the 'Register of Officers' Interests'. Failure to do so may be a criminal offence as well as a disciplinary matter.

21.1.6 You must advise your Principal or Line Manager of any personal dealings of a business or private nature with existing or potential suppliers, consultants or contractors who you know (or could reasonably be expected to know) to have dealings with the School/Academy/Trust.

21.1.7 If you engage or supervise contractors or consultants on behalf of the School/Academy/Trust or have any other official relationship with them you must advise your Principal or Line Manager, prior to any contractual relationship beginning or work being undertaken, if you have or intend to have any private or domestic relationship with them or any of their employees.

21.2 Gifts, inducements, hospitality and sponsorship

21.2.1 See Section 12 regarding the acceptance of gifts. As a guideline, a gift with a value of more than £25 is unlikely to be seen as only a 'token', so needs to be referred to your Principal or Line Manager.

21.2.2 Offers of hospitality, even if of a seemingly minor nature, must be treated with particular caution as they can leave both individuals and the Governing Body open to all manner of allegations of impropriety. The timing of offers of hospitality, e.g. in relation to purchasing, the award of contracts, granting of applications or other decisions, should be considered equally to the generosity of the hospitality offered. Accepting hospitality must be justified in the public interest, e.g. when there is a genuine need to represent the School/Academy/Trust. You must inform your Principal or Line Manager of an invitation or offer of hospitality before it is accepted.

21.3 Personal Purchases

You should be aware of possible conflicts of interest when you buy goods or use the services of firms which have dealings with the School/Academy/Trust and follow any procedures relating to the disclosure of any such transactions. You should neither seek, because of your position, nor accept, because of an organisation's dealings with the School/Academy/Trust, preferential rates, reductions or any other favourable treatment in the purchase of goods and services. This does not apply to generally available schemes or discount schemes arranged by the School/Academy or Trust for all staff.

21.4 Procurement of goods and services and disposal of School/Academy/Trust property

21.4.1 Procurement procedures must be strictly adhered to and you must not accept any inducement or preferential treatment if you are responsible for procuring goods or services for the School/Academy/Trust or disposing of surplus property.

21.4.2 In addition, staff should always be in a position to demonstrate that 'Best Value' has been sought and achieved. Detailed guidance on procurement and tendering is set out in the Trust's Financial Regulations and Procurement Code.

22 CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE

22.1 Unacceptable behaviour and/or failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct or performance will lead to action being taken against you under the appropriate procedure. This includes specifically the failure to behave at all times in accordance with the Trust's stated values.

22.2 You must ensure you understand the requirements of this Code of Conduct, the Safe Working Practice for Staff guidance and any terms and conditions, rules, standards and requirements that apply to you and your job (see also Note 2 below). Any of the examples of unacceptable behaviour listed below may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct depending on the relevance to your role, your seniority, the seriousness of the act and particular circumstances. Those underlined normally will be considered as gross misconduct. The list is not exhaustive and other unacceptable behaviour not specifically listed nevertheless may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct:

- 22.2.1 any form of unjustifiable discrimination, harassment, threatening or bullying behaviour, e.g. on the grounds of race, sex/gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief; whether or not the subject of current legislation
- 22.2.2 any physical, emotional or sexual abuse of a child or other vulnerable person
- 22.2.3 possession, displaying, viewing or downloading of offensive materials, accessing 'unacceptable' websites, e.g. websites of a sexual nature, gambling, betting or gaming, in the workplace or via any portable device, e.g. laptop, mass storage, which is the property of the Trust and has been provided in connection with the postholder's work
- 22.2.4 undertaking private activities during working hours
- 22.2.5 unpunctuality, misuse of time and time recording, unauthorised absence from work
- 22.2.6 refusing to comply with reasonable orders and instructions
- 22.2.7 deliberately causing damage to Trust property
- 22.2.8 harming or endangering other persons or property, e.g. by contravening safety rules
- 22.2.9 neglect of duty/lack of due care or diligence, disruptive behaviour, poor attitude
- 22.2.10 fighting, threatening or actual violence towards, physical assault or abuse of another person whilst at work (NOTE: this does not include reasonable physical restraint necessarily carried out in the course of duty)
- 22.2.11 theft, unauthorised removal, misappropriation, improper or unauthorised use of Trust or other property, systems (including telephones, IT, email and internet), vehicles, equipment, name or other resources. This may include loss by failing to properly secure or safeguard
- 22.2.12 failure to report criminal convictions, particularly those which may be relevant to the type of work undertaken, e.g. driving convictions where the work necessitates driving on Trust business, indecent assault where working with children or vulnerable adults
- 22.2.13 fraudulent or misleading practices and/or omissions in connection with official duties, e.g. deliberately falsifying documents, reports, etc.
- 22.2.14 fraudulent or false claims for payment of salary, expenses and/or allowances, etc. or seeking financial gain by deception
- 22.2.15 acts involving bribery or corruption

- 22.2.16 any action for which it would be appropriate for the Trust or Governing Body as an employer to take legal proceedings (irrespective of whether such proceedings are taken)
- 22.2.17 sexual misconduct at work;
- 22.2.18 willfully breaching any School/Academy/Trust policy or procedure
- 22.2.19 drunkenness, being unable to carry out duties through the influence of any substances including drugs, whether or not prescribed, and alcohol, or for any other avoidable reason. (N.B. It is equally inappropriate for those hosting visitors or working in close proximity to service users such as children and vulnerable adults to have alcohol on their breath even though this may not amount to drunkenness.)
- 22.2.20 possession, buying or selling of weapons, illegal substances or materials at work
- 22.2.21 any breach of trust or security in respect of information or procedures
- 22.2.22 obtaining or attempting to obtain access to any information (including information held or stored by electronic means) to which the employee is not entitled
- 22.2.23 any action which may bring the good name of the School/Academy or the Trust into disrepute
- 22.2.24 as an employee, public opposition to the stated aims and policies of the School/Academy/Trust, criticism or blame of colleagues, Local Academy Governing Body or Governors or Trustees through any medium including internet 'blogs', websites, social networking sites, etc
- 22.2.25 any action unconnected with work which brings in to question your suitability as an employee of the Trust or Governing Body
- 22.2.26 failing to report serious misconduct, aiding or inciting another employee to undertake any of the above actions or other act of wrongdoing.

23 USE OF TRUST RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

- 23.1 Facilities, equipment, vehicles, materials and other resources provided by the Trust for use in your work must not be used for any other purpose without permission or appropriate payment, e.g. photocopying, private telephone calls. Mobile telephones are provided exclusively for business use and must not be used to make private calls. In this context a call 'home' to advise that you have been unavoidably delayed because of work would not be considered a private call.

Note 1: Personal interests (e.g. in contracts/procurement), other potential conflicts of interest and any offer of gifts and/or hospitality, other than of a minor 'token' nature, are to be notified in writing to your Principal or Line Manager who will include them in the Register of Officers' Interests.

Note 2: Under the Bribery Act 2010 it is a criminal offence if a person fails to prevent bribery, bribes another person with the intention of obtaining or retaining a business or a business advantage, or receives a bribe, whether or not unwitting.