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## MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SUPPORT STAFF IN SCHOOLS

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### 1. Policy Statement

The principles of the Code of Conduct will encourage the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct on the part of all employees, workers and volunteers in school. Anyone representing the school in their work is required to promote and maintain these standards in order to uphold the good reputation of the school. (Any reference to employees in this Code includes workers and volunteers).

This Code will help employees to understand the conduct expected and required as an employee and to appropriately manage circumstances where their duties overlap or conflict with their private lives.

The Code forms a key part of the contract of employment with the school and the Council. A failure to observe the Code of Conduct may initially be dealt with informally through advice and instruction. If this does not lead to an acceptable standard of conduct, or if the matter is serious, it will be dealt with in accordance with the School Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

### 2. This applies to:

All support staff and volunteers in schools that have implemented the Pay & Allowances Framework 2015. It also applies to agency workers and contractors who are working for, or on behalf of, the school or Council.

### 3. Roles & Responsibilities:

#### Employees must:

Comply with the standards and requirements of the Code and seek advice from their headteacher if they are unsure what is expected in particular circumstances. Employees are also responsible for promptly reporting any breaches of the Code that they become aware of.

#### Headteachers and managers must:

Ensure that all individuals working for or on behalf of the school are aware of their obligations under the Code and take appropriate action with the individual to resolve any conflicts of interest or deal with any breaches of the Code.

#### Governing Body:

The governing body has a statutory responsibility to determine the disciplinary rules that operate within the school.

### 4. Key Principles

Employees performing duties on behalf of the school:

- Will perform their duties to the highest possible standards, with honesty, integrity and impartiality and will be accountable for their own actions.
- Have a duty of trust to the school and to the pupils of the school and their families.
- Are expected to treat others with respect, fairness and dignity at all times; and have a collective responsibility to communicate any concerns about breaches of the Code to member of the senior management team or to the Chair of Governors.
- In either an official capacity or in their private life, school employees will ensure that they behave in a way that is not seen as bringing the school or the council into disrepute. Employees are entitled to a private life but must take care that the duties of public service are not breached by activities or inappropriate conduct in their off-duty hours.

## **5. Policies, Procedures and Professional Codes of Practice**

Employees must comply with all reasonable management instructions, abide by legislation, statutory and other guidance, the policies and procedures of the school and operational practices as well as health and safety rules. They must also follow the protocols of any relevant professional bodies and the standards required of their particular profession.

## **6. Declaring Personal Interests and Outside Commitments**

Employees must declare:

- Any non-financial or financial interest that might conflict with the school or the Council's interests or services
- Membership of any organisation that is not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules, membership, or conduct.
- Membership of other groups, clubs and societies, e.g. The Round Table and The Rotary, that an employee believes could be relevant to declare in particular circumstances.

Employees should immediately inform their headteacher of any other/additional work or employment they are considering undertaking. The headteacher will ensure the employee is made aware of any contractual restrictions on accepting any additional employment outside of the school, especially in circumstances that may conflict with the school's or the council's interests of the school/Council.

Detailed requirements are set out in the Register of Outside Interests available on the youngsouthampton website. Where employees are in any doubt about whether any personal relationships, interests, or outside commitments should be declared in particular circumstances, they should either declare the information in any case, or else seek further advice from their headteacher.

## **7. Working Relationships**

All internal and external relationships with colleagues, service users and contractors will be conducted in a professional, and respectful way, with honesty and integrity.

## **8. IT Standards**

The school's rules and guidelines on the use of IT and social media are intended to guide employees in the correct use of the IT facilities they need to do their jobs and to protect both the employee and the school's information.

All employees should ensure that they are familiar with the rules and guidelines. Breaches of these will constitute misconduct and may in some circumstances be regarded as gross misconduct. Actions amounting to criminal activity will be reported to the Police and will be regarded as gross misconduct.

## **9. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions**

Employees must inform the school of any criminal conviction or caution received, in a timely and appropriate way. Failure to do so may be regarded as gross misconduct under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure. Appropriate checks will be made in line with DBS/ Children Act or Childcare Disqualification requirements and outcomes of these checks addressed accordingly.

## **10. Equality**

Employees will comply with school's Equality Policy and guidance. Employees must not be involved in harassment or bullying of colleagues, other employees, workers, contractors, or job applicants. All colleagues and members of the local community have a right to be treated fairly and not to suffer from unlawful discrimination.

## **11. Information Security and Confidentiality**

Employees cannot use any information gained in the course of their employment for personal gain or pass it on to anyone else who might use it in this way.

The school and the Council are responsible for the lawful and secure handling and disclosure of personal data in relation to staff, pupils and their families, in carrying out their functions in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The school will therefore ensure that anyone engaged in managing and handling personal information understands that personal data must be treated as confidential and that they are contractually responsible for following good data protection practice. Information concerning another employee, pupil or pupil's family must not be disclosed without prior approval except where the information must be provided by law.

Employees may be criminally liable if they knowingly or recklessly disclose personal information in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 (the 'DPA'). Any breach of the DPA, the school's own information security rules, or the Council's Information Governance policies, may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

## **12. Duty to Act (Whistle blowing)**

The school expects all employees who become aware of activities that they believe are illegal, improper, unethical or in any way inconsistent with the Code of Conduct, to report the matter in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the confidential reporting procedure called the Duty to Act Policy.

Employees must ensure that public interest and assets are protected by reporting immediately any concerns about dishonesty or impropriety that they think has occurred or is likely to have occurred. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Employees should not make any public statements about their concerns until they have exhausted the correct internal procedures, unless such a disclosure is allowed for within the Duty to Act Policy.

The school will take all allegations seriously however if an employee makes an allegation which is frivolous, malicious or for personal gain, the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Refer to the Whistleblowing Policy “Duty to Act” on Young Southampton, Schools HR for further information.

### **13. Gifts, Hospitality, Sponsorship or Endorsements**

It is a criminal offence for School or Council workers to receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing anything, or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. Council employees should exercise caution concerning the acceptance of gifts or hospitality from external suppliers and contractors and any involvement in sponsorship events, or endorsement of a product or service, where there may be a conflict of interest.

The receipt of minor articles, for example diaries and calendars will not be regarded as the acceptance of a gift, although employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers. Offers of hospitality and invitations should be accepted only if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the local authority.

The Council requires all gifts and hospitality offered with a value of £50 or more to be properly recorded on the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action being taken under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

Employees should refer to the “Gift & Hospitality Declaration Procedure” available on the youngsouthampton website and must seek further advice from their headteacher or HR provider if in any doubt about their duties regarding gifts and hospitality.

### **14. Alcohol and Drugs**

Employees must not drink alcohol, use illegal drugs or any other substances whilst at work. Employees must also ensure that the use of alcohol or drugs outside of work does not adversely affect their performance or safety at work or the safety of others and must not bring the school or the Council into disrepute.

Employees who are taking legally prescribed or over-the-counter medication (long-term or short-term) that may affect or impair them, must discuss this urgently with their line manager. The manager/headteacher will consider how to appropriately

manage this, what support the employee may need and any health and safety adjustments required.

If a headteacher reasonably believes that an employee, contractor or agency worker is attempting to carry out their duties while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (either prescription drugs or illegal drugs); the employee must be sent home immediately but will continue to be paid. The headteacher must then raise the issue with the employee under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure or consider ending the contract of the contractor or agency worker.

## **15. Use of School Facilities**

Employees must use any equipment or facilities provided by the school for use in carrying out their work, in a proper and responsible manner. Any inappropriate use of equipment or facilities will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

## **16. Copyright**

All records, documents and other papers that relate to the school and/or Council's business and which are made or obtained by employees in the course of their work are the property of the school/Council. The copyright on all such original records, documents, papers (including copies and summaries of these) belong to the school/Council.

## **17. Links to related topics**

Disciplinary Policy & Procedure  
Dismissal Policy  
Duty to Act (Whistleblowing) Policy  
Register of Employee's Outside Interests  
Gift & Hospitality Declaration Procedure  
Standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT

## **18. Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it complies with current employment legislation and the requirements of the school/Council. Any future amendments to this policy will be consulted upon and negotiated with the recognised trade unions.