



Learning Community Trust Staff Code of Conduct

Applies to all Learning Community Trust staff and all staff employed in LCT Academies

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Introduction

The Learning Community Trust ensures our aims at the forefront of all we do, they represent our values as well as our intentions: These are:

- To focus, across our schools, on excellence by achieving the best possible educational outcomes for our children and students by engaging and inspiring them, building their resilience, and preparing them for work and adult life.
- To drive a collaborative culture across our schools which drives and supports improvement and develops all our staff as leading professionals.
- To provide the highest levels of care and support for our children so they can succeed, including those that are the most disadvantaged, vulnerable or with special needs in our community.
- To ensure our schools are at the heart of the community they serve and are truly inclusive organisations with equality for all across our community
- To engage positively with our families and wider community, building partnerships and programmes that develop opportunities beyond the school sector.

This document outlines the Learning Community Trust's expectation in relation to employee conduct. The document mainly refers to conduct expected in the workplace but also covers conduct when representing the Trust or one of its Academies outside of the workplace e.g. whilst at training events or attending work related functions. It also covers activities on social media that may affect the reputation of the Trust and/or one of our Academies.

It also outlines the Trust's responsibilities to its employees.

This code should also be used in conjunction with other relevant policies and standards such as the Teachers' Standards (2012), the Trust's child protection and safeguarding policies for each Academy, Behaviour for Learning/Behaviour Policies as well as employee's contract of employment and written statement of particulars.

The code acts as a guide to assist in ensuring children's and employee's safety. It explains the responsibilities of the Trust toward employees and children in this regard.

The code, which has been the subject of consultation with recognised trade unions will be reviewed regularly by the Trust Board and reissued to staff after review.

Duty of Care

The Learning Community Trust has a duty of care to the children and students within its academies as well as also to all employees.

This duty should be at the heart of all employer and employee practice.

Our Children and Students – Employees within the Learning Community Trust have a duty to keep children and students safe and protect them from harm and promote children's welfare as outlined in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2022. Employees are therefore in a position of trust and expected to take reasonable steps to ensure students safety and well-being. This duty is included within our Safeguarding Policies, Health and Safety Policies and Behaviour for Learning/Behaviour Policies.

Employees – Employers should provide a safe working environment for employees and provide appropriate guidance on safer working practices. They should also ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. Employees will be informed of the relevant policies of the Trust as part of their induction. Where a new or revised policy is adopted, the Trust/Academy will ensure each employee has access to it. All Trust policies are available to staff on our network.

In addition, each employee has a personal duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

Employees should:

- Understand the responsibilities of their role and possible sanctions should the provisions of this code not be followed
- Act and be seen to act at all times in the best interests of our children and students.
- Act in a way to protect the reputation of the Learning Community Trust
- Avoid conduct which could lead to question over their motivation and intentions
- Act in line with all Learning Community Trust policies and procedures
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Speak up promptly about any concerns they have
- Report any accidents they have been involved in or witnessed
- Have due regard that safeguarding children and their welfare is paramount and everyone's business.
- All staff should make the Principal/Headteacher or Chair of Governors (if this is the head) aware of any relationships and associations both within and outside the work place (including online) that may have implications for the safeguarding of children in school.
- Note that any unjustifiable delay in reporting concerns is not acceptable

As an employer the Trust will:

- Clarify what is expected of an employee at work and where relevant, outside of work
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- Support employees' rights and recognise diversity
- Foster a culture of openness and support
- Ensure that appropriate policies are adopted, implemented, monitored and reviewed e.g. Safeguarding, Child Protection, Staff Code of Conduct
- Ensure that employees have access to and understand guidance, related policies and systems that are in place
- Seek to ensure that employees are not placed in a vulnerable position
- Ensure that those who provide services or activities are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Treat employees reasonably and fairly

Complaints

Should an employee have a concern with the way in which they are being treated by their employer, they should seek to resolve this with either the relevant Head teacher or the Principal before considering the use of the Grievance Procedure. Advice should be sought by the employee from their relevant trade union.

Should an employee have a complaint relating to the Trust or one of its Academies they should use the relevant policy e.g. Whistleblowing Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or Complaints Policy.

Should the employer have concerns regarding employee conduct, the employer will always address the matter at the appropriate level, including initially through discussion with the employee. For more serious matters, the Academy may need to refer to the relevant employment policy e.g. discipline.

Code of conduct

This code covers a number of situations but cannot cover all eventualities. Where it is necessary to refer to a specific Trust policy, this will be noted.

This Code of Conduct is also provided as part of an employee's written statement of particulars when contracts are issued.

Furthermore, the document produced by the Safer Recruitment Consortium "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young people in Educational settings" 2020 is universally regarded as a best practice document working alongside local polices.

1. Dress and Appearance

All employees should dress in a manner that is appropriate for their role, individuals they work with and the work they undertake.

Clothing and appearance should not:

- cause embarrassment or give rise to any misunderstanding
- be likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- be considered to be discriminatory or culturally sensitive
- be political or represent contentious slogans

The **Trust dress code** is that we expect staff to look smart and professional at work and follow these guidelines: -

- male staff are expected to wear a shirt and tie unless working in PE or in a specialist setting
- staff should cover legs to mid-thigh except PE staff wearing shorts
- large tattoos should be covered
- no facial piercings other than earrings
- no highly coloured hair e.g. red/blue etc.
- staff should ensure footwear is suitable e.g. consider safety on stairs as well as poor weather affecting car parks and walk ways

2. Behaviour

All employees have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in both the Trust and their own ability to provide an outstanding level of education and care whilst safeguarding the welfare and best interest of the children and young people they are responsible for.

Equally, all employees should be able to carry out their duties in an environment where all individuals treat each other fairly and with respect and dignity. Acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying will not be tolerated. Employees can expect to be treated reasonably and fairly.

Employees should foster an approach which is aligned to the ethos of the Trust and understand the behaviour policy of the Academy they work in.

It is not acceptable to behave in a manner which could bring into question an employee's suitability to work with students or encourage others to make unprofessional comments or comments which could cause offence.

This level of behaviour is to be expected at all times when representing the Trust and the Academy staff work in, which includes attending such events as training and work -related social functions.

With the rise of social media, it is not acceptable for employees to behave in such a way that would not uphold public confidence within the Trust or relevant Academy. This links to each academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

3. Smoking

The Trust operates a non-smoking policy therefore staff working at any Trust Academy are not permitted to smoke on site or use e-cigarettes.

4. Confidentiality

Employees can expect to have their personal information secured confidentially. Personal matters should also be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Employees within the Trust or individual Academy may have access to private or sensitive information about children and young people. These details must be kept confidential and only shared when it is in the child's best interest to do so in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

5. Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) establishes a framework of rights and duties which aims to make personal information secure. Personal information is information about a living individual, who can be identified from the information.

This Trust is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and handles all personal information in a manner that complies with the DPA 2018 It is the **personal responsibility** of all employees (temporary or permanent), Trustees, Governors, contractors, agents and anyone else processing information on our behalf to comply with this policy.

Storage of any such information should be in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any deliberate breach of this policy could amount to a criminal offence under one or more pieces of legislation, for example the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and the DPA 2018. All breaches will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

6. Use of Physical Storage Media e.g. Memory sticks

Staff should NOT store any confidential information regarding students/staff on external media such as USB sticks and flash cards.

If any data needs to be stored it should be encrypted in line with the Trust policy. Please ask your Academy Network Manager or ICT Technician for advice if in doubt.

7. Security

All employees should wear their ID badge at all times. If you mislay your pass, please inform the relevant member of staff in the academy you work in. This is very important in academies with access-controlled security doors.

If you mislay your keys please report this immediately to the relevant member of staff in the academy you work in.

All employees must use the Inventory system and sign in and out of the building so that, in case of emergencies, we know which adults are on site.

All visitors should be wearing an ID badge with the relevant safeguarding lanyard; please inform reception staff if you are expecting a visitor.

All employees are asked to challenge an adult if they are not wearing an ID badge, if you are not comfortable doing so please report this immediately by telephone to reception so appropriate staff can respond.

8. Gifts

Employees should not receive or accept gifts, loans, fees, hospitality or other forms of reward which influences the way in which duties are carried out.

For transparency if an employee is **given low level “thank you” gifts from parents or children e.g. homemade gifts, flowers, chocolates, biscuits etc.** then they should let the school know. In all cases a professional judgement should be made around what is acceptable, proportionate and appropriate. If in doubt the employee should seek guidance from the Principal/Headteacher of the school.

Employees have a responsibility to report any such reward or suspicions of any such rewards to the relevant Academy Principal or Headteacher.

9. Use of Internet and Social Media

The use of the Internet and Social Media in the work place can be very useful but can also be open to misuse. Employees must take every step to protect themselves when using such ‘media’ and refer to the Social Media Policy that is contained within each academy’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Employees must also be careful when using social media personally to ensure that no activity reflects negatively on the reputation of the Trust or one of its Academies.

In particular: -

- Staff should refrain from mentioning the Trust/Academy and/or issues related to working for LCT on personal social media sites.
- Staff should refrain from communicating with any student, past or present on personal social media.
- Staff should not use personal Twitter accounts at work or private email accounts.
- Staff should seek advice about privacy settings on social media if they are unsure from the Network Manager or ICT Technician in the academy they work in.
- Staff should report any concerns or issues to the relevant academy Principal or Headteacher related to social media which could involve them or the academy.

If these recommendations are not followed, the disciplinary process may be followed.

10. Dealing with the Press

We encourage staff to promote activities and achievements in their school or the Trust in the press.

On the very rare occasion that you might be approached by the press regarding an issue that might compromise you or reflect negatively on the school or Trust please ask for advice from your Headteacher. We can advise you, deal with the press and also take advice from our legal representatives.

11. Mobile Phones

Staff must not use mobile phones for personal use during teaching times. Mobiles should be used in private, if staff need to, away from students in staff rooms/bases/offices away from teaching areas.

Staff may use their personal mobile to record or photograph students in our care but only for internal use, this should be quickly uploaded onto the network and removed after use. Where possible record students and their work using a school device and again quickly remove from the memory and store on the network. If the photograph or images are for use outside the school then parental consent must be in place.

Support and administrative staff should also not use private mobile phones during their working hours.

Key staff, such as pastoral staff or members of SLT have work mobiles so they can be contacted by parents and staff during the working day when they are around the building.

12. Whistle Blowing

If you have any concerns that there may be a breach of this code, it is important that you speak up. Speaking up early helps to protect you, makes investigations easier and could protect the Trust's/Academies reputation. The procedures to follow are in our Whistleblowing Policy on the LCT website.

13. Raising Concerns – Safeguarding

All staff are expected to report “low-level” concerns. A low-level concern is any concern, however small that causes a sense of unease or a “nagging doubt” that an adult working in or on behalf of an academy or LCT may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations thresholds or considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

Such behaviour could include but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photos of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with children on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind closed doors
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive behaviour.

It is critical that all our staff share these concerns with a DSL, Principal/Headteacher or line manager so they can be dealt with effectively. By dealing with these concerns, we protect staff from any false allegations or misunderstandings. We want to embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which LCT's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

All our academies have a stand-alone Child Protection and Safeguarding in Schools Policy with appropriate appendices. These Policies are reviewed annually or when legislation changes. For avoidance of doubt **all school staff** need to be aware and implement the principles of these policies.

It is important to note that these policies supplement and work within the overarching Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures, for avoidance of doubt, these can be viewed at: -

<https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk>
<http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/>

These policies are pivotal to all areas safeguarding and any actions that may be considered, taken and expected of those that work and interact with children.

It also acknowledged that "Working Together" 2018 and "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2021 Parts 1-5 are viewed on the same principle.

On a general level the highest standards of safeguarding conduct are expected from the whole Trust community. It is important to note that in particular well known and peripheral areas of safeguarding concern should be paramount to a child's welfare namely;

- The four Defined Categories of Abuse-Sexual, Emotional, Physical and Neglect as defined on "Working Together" 2018
- Bullying in all forms may transgress across the four defined areas above
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child on Child abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Mental Health
- Serious Violence

- Extremism & Radicalisation (Statutory – “Prevent duty guidance” March 2015)

We expect staff to encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Staff should ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, reasonably practicable steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views to pupils.

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Multi- Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government April 2014 – There is a specific legal duty on teachers, who, in the course of their work in the profession, discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.
- Children That Have Gone Missing (T&W Missing Children Process 2016)
- Forced Marriage-“Handing Cases of Forced Marriage” Multi Agency Practice Guidelines HM Government June 2009
- Children Missing From Education-Whether Authorised or Not
- Poor/Irregular Attendance (Protocol for Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Not Receiving Education)
- Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE)-T&W Pathway Process
- Domestic Violence and Serious Harm
- Drug and substance misuse
- Suicide Intervention
- Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
- Fabricated and induced illness
- Youth violence, gang activity and county lines

Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies will take account of all these issues and therefore staff conduct in addressing any safeguarding concerns is paramount. In line with these policies and doing nothing is not an option.

14. Conflicts of Interest

Employees must be mindful to avoid personal circumstances which could lead to conflict of interest.

15. Health & Safety

The Trust will endeavour to abide by Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of employees at work.

Equally, employees are expected to follow appropriate Health and Safety guidance to keep themselves safe at work. Employees also have their own duty of care to take care of themselves and anyone else affected by their actions or failings.

If any employee witnesses or is involved in an accident at work or identifies an unsafe practice or hazard in the building this should be reported to the relevant member of staff, Principal or Headteacher.

The Trust and each Academy Health and Safety Policy is regularly reviewed and updated.

All Trust Policies and Procedures referred to in this code may be accessed via the Trust SharePoint site or by request from Miss Veronica Croft (PA to the CEO LCT/Company Secretary)