



Melcombe Primary School Staff Code of Conduct

Reviewed by: Adam Morris

Date adopted: 21/02/19

Signed ~~EA Anderson~~

Date 21.2.19

Emma Anderson
Chair of Governing Board

Review Date: 21/02/21

Staff Code of Conduct for School Based Employees

Members of the public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all school based employees. The Staff Code of Conduct contains guidelines on ethical standards and covers issues such as political neutrality, outside commitments, appointments, tendering and contracting for work, personal interests, corruption and sponsorship.

The Code of Conduct is supplementary to the disciplinary procedure that has been adopted by the governing body.

The Code of Conduct assists employees in understanding the standards of conduct arc expected of them and assist managers in ensuring that all staff are treated fairly.

It is recommended good practice by the Local Government Management Board and takes account of the requirements of the law.

Model Code of Conduct for School Based Employees

1 Introduction

(a) The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work in the school and that their conduct should never be influenced by improper motives.

(b) The purpose of this code is to provide guidance for all employees in the school on the ethical standards expected of them, particularly where the exercise of individual judgement is necessary in order to maintain public confidence. It is of particular significance for employees involved in the procurement of goods and services.

(c) This document is based on a model drawn up by the Local Government Management Board and has been adopted by the Council in relation to non-school employees. It takes account of the requirements of the law and the appropriate national conditions of service.

(d) Failure to meet the standards and requirements of this code may result in disciplinary action. If in doubt, employees should seek advice from their Headteacher, in the case of the Headteacher, from the Director of Education.

2 Standards

Employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to pupils and parents, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to other employees and Governors with impartiality. Employees should bring to the attention of management any deficiency in the provision of service and must report any impropriety or breach of procedure.

3 Disclosure of information

(a) The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Governors, Members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public e.g. on school performance and budgetary matters.

(b) Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor shall they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

(c) Only employees authorised by their Headteacher to do so may talk to the Press, or otherwise make public statements on behalf of their school. Generally, an employee (including a Headteacher) contacted by the Press should seek the advice of the Council's Press Office who may deal with the matter on the school's behalf if the school wishes.

This is not intended to prevent employees from writing or talking to the press on behalf of a trade union.

4 Political Neutrality/Activity

(a) Employees serve the Governing Body of their school within the overall framework of the Council.

(b) Some school based non-teaching employees, who are normally those in more senior positions, are in politically restricted posts and by law are prevented from taking part in certain political activities outside their work. Employees who are in this position should have been told of this in writing and of the rules for claiming exemption, but any employee who is in any doubt about their position should contact their Headteacher. In any event, all teachers including the Headteacher are exempt from these restrictions.

(c) Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and must exercise careful judgement if asked to express personal opinions in the course of their work.

5 Relationships

(a) Governors

Some employees are required to give advice to Governors as part of their job. Mutual respect between employees and Governors is essential to good local practice in schools but close personal familiarity between employees and individual Governors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and should therefore be avoided.

(b) The school, local community and service users

Employees must always remember their responsibilities to the school and wider community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the school and wider community.

(c) Contractors

All relationships with contractors or potential contractors must be made known to the Headteacher. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no favouritism should be shown to businesses run by for example friends, partners or relatives. No part of the community should be discriminated against.

Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have an official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity, must declare that relationship to the Headteacher.

6 Appointment and other employment matters

(a) Headteachers and other employees involved in appointments must ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the work. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a personal relationship outside work with them.

(b) Similarly, Headteachers and other employees must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner or close friend.

7 Outside commitments

(a) Employees' off-duty hours are their personal concern, but they must not subordinate their duty to their private interests or put themselves in a position where duty and private interests conflict.

(b) The Council would not wish to preclude employees unreasonably from undertaking additional work unless that work:

* conflicts with or detrimentally affects the interests of the Council or individual school's interests or

* in any way weakens public confidence in the conduct of the Council's or individual school's business or any other way adversely affects their ability to undertake their work.

Should this be the case, their conduct will be considered a breach of the Council's or school's Disciplinary Code.

(c) Employees must not, therefore, engage in any other business or take up any other additional appointment without first having carefully considered and ruled out the possibility of an adverse effect on their work or the interests of the Council or their school. Where there is any doubt as to the implications, the nature of the proposed employment must be discussed with their Chief Officer or Headteacher.

(d) If an employee decides to take up additional employment or engage in any other business, no outside work of any sort should be undertaken in the workplace and use of facilities for this, e.g. telephones, photocopying, etc., is forbidden.

8 Personal Interests

(a) Employees must declare to their Headteacher, non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the school's interests.

Membership of a trade union is exempted from this requirement.

(b) Employees must declare any financial interests which could conflict with the school's interests.

(c) Employees must declare to their Headteacher or in the event of the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors, membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about its rules or membership or conduct e.g. freemasons.

(d) Employees who have an interest, financial or non-financial, should not involve themselves in any decision on allocation of school services or resources from which they, their friends or family might benefit, and should ensure that the matter is referred immediately to their Headteacher, or in the event of the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors.

9 Equality Issues

Employees have an obligation to ensure that policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the school are complied with, as well, of course, as the requirements of the law. Everyone in the school and its wider community have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

10 Separation of roles during tendering

(a) Where employees are involved in letting contracts, or procuring goods or services, on behalf of the school, they must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

(b) Such employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

(c) Such employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

11 Corruption

It is a criminal offence for an employee to receive or give 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. It is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

12 Use of financial resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner, ensuring value for money to the school and its wider community and avoiding legal challenge to the school or the Council.

13 Hospitality

(a) Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the school in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the school should be seen to be represented. It must be properly authorised and recorded in a hospitality register maintained by the school.

(b) When hospitality has to be declined the offerer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the school.

(c) Employees must not accept significant personal gifts from pupils, parents, contractors and outside suppliers, other than insignificant tokens such as pens or diaries or small festive gifts.

(d) When considering whether or not to accept hospitality, employees must be sensitive to the timing of decisions for letting contracts for which the provider may be bidding, and must never accept hospitality from a contractor during a tendering period.

(e) Acceptance by employees of hospitality whilst in attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is for the school rather than personal, where the school gives consent in advance and where the school is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment etc. are required, employees must ensure that the school meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

14 Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

(a) Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is sought to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

(b) Where the school wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the Headteacher of any such interest. Similarly, where the school through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees must ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.