



The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation



Staff Code of Conduct

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This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and a help to all federation staff. It sets out the standards of conduct which staff are expected to follow when within, or representing, the federation. This code is not exhaustive but is written to assist staff and it is important that staff should take advice and guidance if necessary. If in doubt about any aspect of the code, seek advice from the Executive Head, Head of School or Chair of Governors.

The underlying purpose is to ensure that the federation provides a high quality service to its pupils and stakeholders. It takes in the requirements of the law and attempts to define the required levels of professionalism to ensure the well-being of the federation, its staff and its stakeholders. The code of conduct has been drafted to comply with federation policies and procedures.

Staff are requested to read this Code carefully and consider the issues that it raises.

1. Introduction

In our capacity as federation staff and governors, we have a duty to work at all times within the law and according to federation and LA procedures, and to behave in a way that reflects well on the federation.

As employees, staff must not put themselves in a position where duty and private interests conflict and must not make use of their employment to further private interests.

We should all be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Everyone is entitled to be treated fairly. Staff should have a positive attitude, manner and appearance and work both efficiently and safely within the requirements of their contract.

This code sets out the standards of conduct expected by the Governing Body of all federation staff. It is not intended to restrict employees in the general exercise of their civil rights as citizens nor in their rights to engage in legitimate trade union activities.

This code of practice links for teachers to Part B of the Teachers Standards: Personal and Professional Conduct and to The Safer Recruitment Consortium document, 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings.' May 2019 and April 2020 Addendum – updated February 2022.

The Governing Body expects that all staff will deal with pupils and parents with respect, courtesy and helpfulness. It will not tolerate discrimination by staff members particularly on the grounds of race, gender, religious belief, disability, sexuality, marital status, HIV status, age, personal circumstances or any irrelevant criminal conviction. This includes not passing on to anyone information about pupils and their parents unless there is a need for them to have this information in the course of their work. (See Equality Policy).

2. Keeping Pupils Safe

Members of Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils in accordance with the Federation's Safeguarding Policy (See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). This includes not promoting or encouraging extremism or radicalisation.

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Designated Lead for Safeguarding or in their absence to one of the Designated Safeguarding Deputies.

Copies of the federation's Safeguarding and Whistleblowing procedures are in the Staffroom. Staff need to read and understand Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023. Training will be given at initial induction, annual induction and there will be in depth whole school training every two years. In addition, staff are given regular updates/reminders.

3. Low-Level Concerns About Members of Staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, but is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt.'

For example, this may include:

- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on a personal device;
- engaging in 1:1 activities with children where they can't easily be seen; and
- humiliating pupils.

Low level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy. We encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage. This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low level concerns is covered in more detail in our Safeguarding Policy.

4. Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is in the 'public interest' to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- pupil or staff health and safety being put in danger;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation or a statutory requirement; and
- attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest.

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover up any such activity.

Staff should report their concern to Maria Gilmore. If the concern is about Maria Gilmore, or it is believed that they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to Mr. Peter Fidel, the Chair of the Federation Governing Body.

5. Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care.

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults therefore have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Adults should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others. Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils to secure or strengthen a friendship. This includes giving any personal details to a pupil such as a home/mobile phone number, home or email address.

They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Staff should advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil, where it is apparent that it may give rise to a concern.

6. Working Safely

The Governing Body, in conjunction with the LA, will do everything it can to meet any statutory obligation and ensure that the federation is a safe and healthy working environment. However, safety is everyone's responsibility. It is your duty to notice and take action. Members of staff are expected to:

- Follow the federation's and LA's Health & Safety policies.
- Take reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of themselves, pupils and staff, and ensure that safety equipment is not misused or damaged.
- If it is urgent, report directly to the school office any accidents or near misses.
- If it is non-urgent record in the Premises Book.
- Personal Safety – do not put yourself in a vulnerable position, particularly with parents. Make sure someone knows where you will be or that you have planned for someone to 'support' you if need be.
- Let SLT know about any concerns regarding aggressive/confrontational/challenging parents. We, along with the premises team, will support you.
- Staff entering or leaving the site (other than at the beginning of end of their working day) should sign in and out. It is essential that this take place so that we know who is on site in the event of a fire alarm.
- Visitors to the federation site should have signed in at the office and they should be wearing the appropriate visitor's lanyard, as follows:
 - Green – On the school's SCR, engaging in regular activity in school. For example, regular supply teachers, regular parent volunteers.
 - Yellow – DBS checked/identity check has taken place and is clear. Not on the school's SCR. For example, visitors in school to deliver workshops, contractors working on site.
 - Red – No DBS check/no identity check. Must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.
 - Purple – School governors. On the SCR.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Challenge any adults on site that they do not recognise, particularly if they are not wearing a lanyard or if they are wearing a red lanyard and they are not accompanied by a member of school staff.
- Wear clothes which do not put health and safety at risk and to wear any safety clothing and equipment provided.
- Attend any medical examinations required by the Governing Body.
- Tell the Head of School if they are taking any medication which would affect their ability to do their work.
- Cooperate in all activities including training organised to promote safety.
- Fire: Staff must familiarise themselves and make children aware of the fire precautions, procedures and fire drill routines.

7. Criminal Charges and Convictions

The Federation requires all applicants to disclose criminal convictions, whether committed in the UK or elsewhere. You must:

- Notify the Federation in writing if charged with any criminal offence or if convicted of any criminal offence, this includes cautions.
- If charged with an offence, advise the Federation as your employer immediately after you are charged (i.e. next working day).

It should be noted that the term 'conviction' includes a finding of guilt, regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded. Failure to notify the Federation in either case will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

8. Working Hours

Members of teaching staff should arrive in school by 8.20am in order to set up their classrooms and be prepared for the day. Other members of staff should arrive at school in good time to begin their contracted hours.

Teachers should be available before and after the end of the school day to telephone or meet with colleagues, parents and SLT if required.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the federation nor be at a level that may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

9. Absence Procedures

If for any reason you are delayed in the morning, it is your responsibility to ensure that the appropriate person in school is informed at the earliest opportunity.

If a member of staff is going to be absent, he/she must telephone the designated member of SLT between 6.30am and 7.30am. A specific reason should be given i.e. not 'unwell.' A message should also be left on the school answering machine.

On the first day of absence:

TEACHING STAFF/SLT: Phone Maria Gilmore between 6.30 am – 7.30 am, and also leave a message on the school answer phone between 6.30 am -7.30 am (*phone number can be found on the Staff Absence Card*).

SUPPORT STAFF: Phone Lorraine McGuire between 6.30 am – 7.30 am, and also leave a message on the school answer phone between 6.30 am - 7.30 am (*phone number can be found on the Staff Absence Card*).

All staff are expected to phone the school office **by 2.30pm on each day of absence** (or the end of designated period) Monday to Thursday to state whether or not they are returning the next day. **If the absence is on a Friday, a phone call should be made by 2.30pm giving an indication of the likelihood or not of returning on Monday. This decision should be confirmed by phoning Maria Gilmore/Lorraine McGuire between 6.30 and 7.30 on Monday morning.** If a medical certificate has been written by the doctor, with a return date, there is no need to phone every day but you should phone the school office to let a member of the SLT know that you will be returning on the date specified by the certificate.

Following any absence a return to work interview should take place with the Phase leader or line manager. **If any member of staff is absent for a week or longer, they should see Maria Gilmore on return to work.**

9.1 Time Off For Leave or Appointments

We do not give unpaid leave for anything other than for exceptional circumstances and this must be agreed, in advance, by the Head of School via a Leave of Absence request form.

Routine medical appointments should, whenever possible, be organised to take place out of school hours in order to minimise the disruption to the children's education.

10. Fitness for Work

The Federation accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available. You must:

- Ensure that the use of alcohol out of work does not adversely affect your work performance, the health, safety or welfare of yourself or others and does not damage the Federation image and reputation.
- If you are a Head of School or Manager, consider the options available for managing employees in the above situation and refer to the alcohol policy and guidance.
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.
- Ensure that the use of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances does not adversely affect the work performance and safety of yourself or others, and does not bring the Federation into disrepute.
- If taking medication you must seek the advice of your doctor to ensure that such medication will not impede your ability to do the job (e.g. operate machinery).
- Inform your Head of School or Line Manager of any situations where a risk to yourself or others may arise because of this.
- If you are a Head of School or Line Manager consider the options available for assisting employees who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose levels of performance has been impaired. In these circumstances, a risk assessment should be undertaken.

11. Professional Dress For Work

Our dress code, for all staff, is smart casual. Clothing must be suitable to wear when working with children, practical enough to allow ease of movement and smart enough to reflect high standards of professionalism.

- No denim, of any colour, is to be worn. This includes denim jeans, skirts, dresses, shirts or jackets.
- Skirts/ dresses should be of a suitable length for working with children.
- No trainers, or styles such as converse, are to be worn, except for PE.
- In hot weather, shoulder straps on tops or dresses must be wide enough to cover all underwear.
- No thin or 'spaghetti' straps should be worn and no strapless tops.
- Shoes must have a back or a strap around the ankle or heel (no flip-flops or other backless styles).
- Heels must be of a reasonable height, bearing in mind practicality around children (see above).
- Smart/casual shorts can be worn in hot weather (and in PE sessions).

Staff who are engaged in PE lessons should ideally be wearing full PE kit. The minimum expectation is that trainers are worn.

Staff accompanying children on visits should adhere to this code, unless the trip requires a particular type of clothing e.g. when investigating rivers or going on muddy walks.

11.1 Jewellery and Piercings

For safety reasons staff should not wear excessive amounts of jewellery. Piercings should be restricted to the ears and/or one small nose stud. Other facial or visible piercings should be removed whilst on federation grounds or on trips.

11.2 Tattoos

Due to the impressionable nature of young children, the governing body would appreciate tattoos and other body art being covered up whilst in school. Any tattoos that remain visible must be discreet. No tattoo should be visible if it shows sexual, obscene or violent words or imagery.

12. Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of federation property and facilities. Staff are expected to use the lockers/locked drawers provided and not to leave money or valuables (including mobile phones) unlocked in desks or bags.

Care must be taken to return any items of federation property that are used during the school day e.g. cameras, and not to leave them insecurely in classrooms at the end of the day.

Staff may not borrow federation property or use it for any other employment.

Staff should not use the photocopier or any federation resources for their own private use without authorisation.

Copyright: Staff must observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.

12.1 Gifts

If federation staff are offered favours, substantial gifts (worth over £50) or gifts that could be thought to be compromising, they must consult the Heads of School before accepting the gift.

The receipt of minor articles, often by way of trade advertisements, which will be used on the Federation's business (e.g. diaries, calendars, office requisites, etc.) which are customarily distributed at Christmas and, occasionally, at other times, is acceptable.

13. Smoking

The Federation is a non-smoking organisation. Staff are not permitted to smoke in any of the Federation's buildings, grounds or directly outside the schools, at any time.

14. Parking

We expect all staff to respect our neighbours and park accordingly. Do not park across the drives of our neighbours.

15. Use Of Social Media / Mobile Phones

All staff are expected to sign and adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Staff must not post any comments, photographs, images or conversations on social networking websites that may bring themselves or the federation into disrepute. Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing any personal information. Internet users must not display, access, use, store, distribute, print, reveal or otherwise process any kind of image, document or other material which is sexually explicit or offensive in any other way, on any federation system.

All staff must work within the requirements of the UK - General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (see point 19).

The federation ICT systems may not be used for private purposes, unless the Head of School has given permission for that use. The security of ICT systems must not be compromised.

Members of staff should not use their mobile phones for private or federation use during the school day apart from at break times. This should not happen in the presence or earshot of children. Mobile Phones should be kept in a secure place.

Telephone calls or messages for federation business should be carried out via the federation telephone system unless in an emergency or with prior permission from the Head of School. Personal phones should not be used to take photographs/films. See mobile phone policy.

16. Communication

Briefing Meetings	Thursday at 8.20am
PDMs	Wednesday at 3.30pm – 4.45pm
SLT & Phase Leader Meetings	Tuesday at 3.30pm

- Support staff Meetings – a regular and comprehensive Continuing Professional Development package is planned for support staff, with training taking place both in and out of school.
- Phase Meetings – there is no requirement from SLT as to how a phase is run. Phase Leaders should communicate in the way that they feel most appropriate: email, memo, meetings. Communication needs to be clear and focused.
- Electronic Diary – responsibility of individuals to enter dates/visits/visitors etc. State clearly who visitors are meeting with.
- If Supply cover is needed this should be stated in the diary.
- Whiteboard with two week, weekly and daily updates in the staffroom.
- Wellbeing Board in the staffroom, details of events and activities for staff.
- The Phase Leader is crucial in ensuring smooth communication and regular feedback from SLT to phase teams and vice versa.

17. Working With The Media

Staff should not speak, write or give interviews, which include phone calls, to the press about federation or Local Authority business without prior agreement with the Heads of School or Chair of Governors. The LA has a press office that deals with the media and their advice should be sought before statements are made. The press office will deal with all media inquiries on behalf of the federation.

18. Political Neutrality

The Federation will not concern itself with the political beliefs of individuals unless they promote extremist views, when immediate action will be taken to safeguard pupils. The accepted governmental definition of extremism is:

“Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas,” The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015.

You must not allow your own political beliefs to interfere with the work of the Federation and you may not display party political posters, including election material, in any place of work.

19. Confidentiality

Staff should maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to pupil and staff records and other sensitive matters. They should take care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters with the federation community, including online, that could cause distress to federation staff, pupils or parents.

All staff must work within the requirements of the UK - General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The UK-GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 protects personal data which relates to living identifiable individuals and deals with the way in which personal information is collected, held, recorded and used. It aims primarily to give control to citizens and residents over their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment for international business.

The Freedom of Information Act gives significant rights of access to information held by all public authorities.

Further details can be found in our Data Protection Policy, its Data Breach Process and the Acceptable User Policy, which staff must adhere to at all times.

20. Administrative Duties

Teaching staff must maintain and properly complete a register for all classes. Attendance registers must be completed / returned to the school office by 9.30am and 1.40pm each day

A Risk Assessment must be completed by the trip leader and signed by the relevant Head of School before every school trip. See Visits and Visitors protocol.

Staff must obtain permission from the Heads of School:

- before taking pupils off the school premises; or
- before arranging any visiting speakers.

Staff must obtain permission from the Heads of School or Phase leader before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the federation (teachers/support staff).

21. Disciplinary Procedure

The Federation also has a separate capability procedure, which provides a framework for managers and employees to cope with issues of poor performance. The underlying intention of the Procedure is to give the employees who are falling below the established acceptable standards the opportunity to improve.

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