



# OUR LADY OF LOURDES

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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## Code of Conduct for Employees

March 2024



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## Romans 12:16-18

Have the same concern for everyone. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise. If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody.

## 1 Aims

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with our Disciplinary Policy and, for members of the Teaching Staff, the [Teachers' Standards](#).
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations the School/CMAT has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance, they should speak to their Line Manager/Headteacher.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4 Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the provisions contained in this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. Casual and self-employed workers, agency staff and volunteers are also expected to observe the standards of behaviour set out in this Code.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the School/CMAT, outside of work, can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment (see disciplinary rules).

## 3 General Principals

Staff set an example to pupils. All staff must:

- ✓ Be committed actively to safeguarding the interests of our children and young people.
- ✓ Be committed to upholding the Catholic ethos of the CMAT at all times.
- ✓ Be role models for our children and young people and as such aspire to model the highest standards of behaviour, in and out of work.
- ✓ Work proactively to uphold the principles of equality and diversity.
- ✓ Demonstrate the highest levels of personal integrity, honesty and confidentiality in their professional roles and relationships.
- ✓ Treat all colleagues, pupils, students, parents and other visitors with respect and dignity.
- ✓ Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role and be

aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.

## 4 Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

4.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. There is a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse, including verbal assaults
- Neglect
- Unequal treatment or discrimination

This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes. This duty means that staff must inform their Line Manager/Headteacher, or suitable senior person in their absence, if they believe a colleague or visitor is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or well being of any child or young person.

4.2 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

4.3 To do this employees must have fully read and understood our Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, have undertaken Safeguarding training as required by the School/CMAT, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times. Employees must be aware that the duty to safeguard our children and young people includes the duty to report any concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection.

All staff are also required to read at least Part 1 of the latest version of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' which is available from the Headteacher or via the Gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

Staff must also be familiar with the document "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" (Safer Recruitment Consortium, May 2019) and must comply with the expectations detailed in that document. A link to the Safer Recruitment Consortium website is provided below and the Guidance document is available by clicking on the link in the 'Guidance for safer working practice' section:

<https://saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/>

4.4 Employees must treat all pupils with dignity and respect. Employees must not make jokes or sarcastic comments at the expenses of pupils, embarrass or humiliate pupils or discriminate for or against them.

4.5 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

- 4.6 Employees must comply with the CMAT's IT and Social Media Policies and should note that the use of personal mobile phones or devices to record or photograph children or young people is prohibited.

## 5 Duty of Care

Staff must:

- ✓ Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
- ✓ Always act, and be seen to act, in the best interests of our pupils and young people.
- ✓ Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions.
- ✓ Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

## 6 Health & Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- ✓ Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by the School as published in the Staff Handbook or issued by the CMAT
- ✓ Read and understand the School's/CMAT's Health and Safety Policy
- ✓ Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the School/CMAT
- ✓ Comply with any hygiene requirements
- ✓ Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- ✓ Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the school community or visitors.
- ✓ Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere.

## 7 Conduct, Honesty and Personal Integrity

- 7.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our CMAT.
- 7.2 To have regard at all times for the Catholic character of the School and the CMAT and not, at any time, do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to this. Employees uphold public trust in our Schools and the CMAT and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside the School/CMAT, by:
- ✓ Treating pupils/ student, colleagues, parents/carers and others with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
  - ✓ Having regard for the need to safeguard the well-being of pupils/students, in accordance with statutory provisions.
  - ✓ Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
  - ✓ Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- ✓ Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils'/ students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

- 7.3 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our School/CMAT and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality ensuring for example that they arrive at a time which enables them to begin their contracted hours promptly.
- 7.4 Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of School/CMAT property and facilities.
- 7.5 All staff must comply with the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010. Under this act, a person may be guilty of an offence of bribery if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if the request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person (see section 14 in this document 'Gifts and Hospitality' for further details).
- 7.6 The following are examples of behaviour that the CMAT will regard as unacceptable:
- ✓ Using aggressive/offensive language or adopting an aggressive manner (for example by repeatedly shouting).
  - ✓ Telephoning people unnecessarily at home (for example by demanding work when someone is on sickness absence rather than making a welfare call to check how they are doing).
  - ✓ Ridiculing or demeaning others either in person or via Social Media.
  - ✓ Spreading malicious gossip about others in their absence.
  - ✓ Discussing your own or someone's private life inappropriately.

This list is not exhaustive and is simply a guide to help individuals to consider their own behaviour and that of others.

## 8 Tackling Discrimination

- 8.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that pupils/students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 8.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.
- 8.3 It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of a 'protected characteristic'. These are listed below:
- ✓ Age
  - ✓ Being married or in a civil partnership
  - ✓ Being pregnant or on maternity leave
  - ✓ Disability
  - ✓ Gender reassignment
  - ✓ Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin

- ✓ Religion or belief
- ✓ Sex/Gender
- ✓ Sexual orientation

8.4 The CMAT will not tolerate any form of discrimination either direct or indirect on the grounds of protected characteristics and failure to comply with this may result in disciplinary action being taken against an employee or group of employees which could result in a formal sanction including dismissal.

## 9 Professional Boundaries and Relationships

- 9.1 Employees in our CMAT are in a position of trust in relation to our pupils/students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals.
- 9.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with pupils/students.
- 9.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any pupil/student or discuss their own or any other sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils/students. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any pupil/student is unacceptable and illegal.
- 9.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any pupil/student and should not allow pupils/students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Pupils/Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.
- 9.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation, this should be reported to Headteacher/SLT Line Leader immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 9.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the School/CMAT we expect that they identify this to the Headteacher (CEO if employed in Central Team) and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

## 10 Confidentiality and protection of data

- 10.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils/students, colleagues or other matters relating to the School/CMAT. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a pupil's/student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.
- 10.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed

they should speak to the Headteacher/their Line Manager.

- 10.3 The School/CMAT holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the School/CMAT's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Headteacher or, in the case of a centrally based CMAT role, their Line Manager.
- 10.4 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of our policies that relate to data including our IT policies.

## **11 Physical contact with pupils/students**

- 11.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils/students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the pupil's/student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the pupil/student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a pupil/student. Employees should ensure that they have read and understood our Physical Contact Policy.
- 11.2 There may also be occasions where a pupil/student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher.
- 11.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with pupils/students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 11.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with pupils/students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **12 Social contact with pupils/students**

- 12.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with pupils/students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship and should read and understand the Social Media Policy. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with pupils/students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc., to any pupil/student then they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher.
- 12.2 The School/CMAT's advice to staff is not to connect to pupils/students via social media or other communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and that the employee can demonstrate that this is the case.

- 12.3 Our School/CMAT is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with pupils/students outside of the School/CMAT. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Headteacher any contact that they have had with a pupil/student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

## 13 Working one to one with pupils/students

There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a pupil/student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

- ✓ Avoid meeting on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas.
- ✓ Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room.
- ✓ Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand.
- ✓ Reports to their line manager if the pupil/student becomes distressed or angry.

## 14 Dress and appearance

Working in our School/CMAT employees are role models to our pupils/students and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive, political or other contentious logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. Tattoos should not be visible and we ask that visible piercings are in line with professional image. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate, then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed.

## 15 Gifts and hospitality

- 15.1 Staff should not give gifts to pupils/students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy.
- 15.2 Any gifts, rewards or entertainment received or offered from clients, public officials, suppliers or other business contacts or associates of the School/CMAT should be reported immediately to the Headteacher or, in the case of the Central team, the Finance Director. This reporting requirement does not include small 'one off' token gifts from pupils/students/parents for example at the end of the term or year.
- 15.3 As a general rule, only small tokens of appreciation, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

## 16 Keeping within the law

- 16.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.
- 16.2 Employees must ensure that they:
- ✓ Uphold the law at work
  - ✓ Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the School/CMAT, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
    - Submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims).
    - Sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
    - crimes of violence.
    - Possession or use of illegal drugs.
    - Crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
    - Breaching copyright on computer software or published documents.
- 16.3 Staff must write and tell the Headteacher (Chair of Governors if they are the Headteacher) or, if they work in the Central CMAT team, the CEO immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the School/CMAT (this includes anything which may have occurred outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or CEO/Directors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the School/CMAT, could affect the employee's suitability to work with children or in any way makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties. Failure to disclose information may result in disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.
- 16.4 Staff in posts covered by the disqualification requirement under the Childcare Act 2006 (as amended by the 2018 guidance) must still comply with the requirement to disclose offences relevant to themselves and to keep this information up to date throughout the year.

## 17 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

- 17.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our School/CMAT means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.
- 17.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 places a duty on the employer to manage an allegation "that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm" if a person working in the CMAT has:

*"behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children"*

All staff working in our schools or the Central Team must be mindful of the above and ensure that no element of their conduct either inside or outside of work could expose them to such an allegation.

- 17.3 Staff must also ensure that they do not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the School/CMAT or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the School/CMAT community.

Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the School/CMAT or affect the School/CMAT's reputation may be addressed under our disciplinary procedure. This includes also conduct via a variety of methods of communication such as social media, word of mouth, written, phone and text.

- 17.4 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.
- 17.5 You must notify the School/CMAT immediately if any situation happens outside your work at the School/CMAT which could be relevant to the CMAT as your employer under clauses 17.2, 17.3 or 17.4.
- 17.6 Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with the Disciplinary Policy.

## **18 Low Level Concerns – 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2022**

- 18.1 As part of the CMAT's commitment to safeguarding, all employees are expected to observe professional boundaries at all times and to be mindful of not engaging in behaviour which could be classed as a 'low level concern' under Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022).
- 18.2 KCSIE (September 2021) defines a low level concern as "any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:
- ✓ Is inconsistent with the staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work that raises safeguarding concerns, and;
  - ✓ Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- 18.3 However, KSCIE states that this does not mean that a 'low level concern' is insignificant and therefore appropriate follow up action will be taken by the CMAT as necessary.
- 18.4 KSCIE states that examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- ✓ Being over friendly with children.
  - ✓ Having favourites.
  - ✓ Taking photographs 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.

- 18.5 As part of the School/CMAT commitment to safeguarding, all employees must also comply with the CMAT requirement that any such concerns about adults working at a CMAT School or in the Central Team (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are reported promptly to the DSL (or CEO for Central Team).
- 18.6 Further information regarding low level concerns is given in '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' paragraphs 424 -445.

## 19 Undertaking additional employment

- 19.1 No personal business activity or outside work of any sort maybe undertaken by employees during their normal working hours for the School/CMAT. However, during other times, the CMAT will not unreasonably preclude any of its employees from undertaking additional employment but such employment must not conflict with, or be detrimental to, the School's/CMAT's interests and the health and safety of the employee.
- 19.2 If such additional employment is undertaken, no School/CMAT equipment, accommodation or resources may be used in connection with these activities.

## 20 Personal use of social media

- 20.1 Staff must be especially careful when using Social Media not to engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the School/CMAT. The term 'Social Media' may include (but is not limited to) blogs, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, video/photos sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger.
- 20.2 Staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.
- 20.3 Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.
- 20.4 The following are examples of the personal use of social media that the CMAT will regard as unacceptable:
- ✓ Publishing or forwarding material which could be deemed to undermine the Catholic ethos of the CMAT.
  - ✓ Publishing or forwarding material which may be considered discriminatory on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic (see section 8.3) or which is contrary to the duty to positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, material of a racist or sexist nature or material which seeks demean or threaten those with a particular religious belief or which could be considered to ridicule or be hurtful to those with a disability.
  - ✓ Publishing or forwarding material (including pictures and messages) that may be considered threatening, hurtful, demeaning or defamatory to others.

- ✓ Discussing your own or someone's private life inappropriately online.

This list is not exhaustive and is simply a guide to help individuals to consider their own behaviour and that of others

20.5 Failure to meet the expected standard of behaviour in the personal use of Social Media may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to a formal sanction including dismissal

## 21 Review

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended on an annual basis by the CMAT. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this Code of Conduct to ensure it is working effectively.

|                       |                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date Issued</b>    | <b>March 2024</b>                                    |
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| <b>Reviewer</b>       | <b>HR &amp; Staffing Committee / OLoL Exec Board</b> |
| <b>Author</b>         | <b>Gemma Tovey, HR Manager</b>                       |

