CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING TRUST

Code of Conduct for Employees

Responsibility:	HR / FAR	
Last reviewed on:	Jul 2026	
Approved by:	Trust Board	Date: 13th July 2026
Signed on behalf of Trust Board:	A Bailey	Andrew Bailey Chair of the Board
Next review due by:	Aug 2027	

Policy Amendments:

May 2025	Section 4 and 5 added to the policy.
Jan 2026	Section 12, paragraph 7 - Social Media Policy wording amended to ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
	Section 12, paragraph 13 now includes escalation to CEO where appropriate
	Section 9, paragraph 5 - Rewording of Gifts received
Jul 2026	Expectation for staff to read policy annually, rewording of some paragraphs to provide clarity (dress code, use of mobile phones) and additional paragraph under confidentiality to ensure other policies and statutory regulations are adhered to.

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1. Introduction and Scope

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour for all Trust staff so they know what is expected of them and are treated fairly. As a Co-operative Trust, many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on our underlying values of respect, trust, honesty, integrity, responsibility and cooperation.

The policy and procedure will apply to all colleagues, regardless of length of service, but does not form part of the contract of employment and can be varied from time to time and in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

All employees have personal and legal responsibilities. These include: treating others with dignity and respect, acting honestly, using public funds and school equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff at all levels.

The Trust requires that all staff, including volunteers and Governors read (and if necessary seek clarification) and understand this Code of Conduct, as everyone is required to comply with it. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and with the associated school policies and required reading may result in disciplinary action being taken.

This document complements statutory guidance on safeguarding and professional standards including the Teacher Standards. All staff are expected to read this policy on induction and annually as part of the annual safeguarding training to confirm they understand and will comply with the policy. .

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct and the focus upon safeguarding children's wellbeing and maintaining public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

We expect all support staff, Governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our Trust and schools are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, its stakeholders and partners, it's schools and its pupils.

All school staff are expected to make responsible and reasonable decisions and act in the best interests of the school and the welfare of the pupils. All staff must demonstrate

the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and adults with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law. Understand the statutory framework they must act within
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards, particularly part 2

2. Safeguarding Pupils

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff have a duty to safeguard students from:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

All staff must be familiar with and understand the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable young adults. If any member of staff does require clarification on these policies and procedures, they must make their line manager aware and seek the relevant advice. In addition, all staff have a responsibility to comply with the relevant statutory guidance on safeguarding including the annually revised KCSIE and Working Together documents.

Staff should be aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in their school and familiarise themselves with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing procedures.

New staff will receive Safeguarding training as part of their induction, and all staff will receive updated training on a regular basis and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff must act immediately where they have concerns about a child's welfare.

3. Use of mobile and smart devices

Staff must not use their mobile phone or smart device as a camera in school. Any photograph/video must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school computers/laptops/tablets. Only use school mobiles whilst out on trips for contacting parents/carers. For the purpose of accessing Arbor for medical or emergency contacts staff will be provided with temporary access on their personal device if required.

Mobile devices must not be used in the presence of pupils except where authorised for educational or safeguarding purposes (requests to be exempt for personal reasons must be made to a member of the Senior Leadership Team). Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present or in designated areas. For Early Years Settings, please note there is additional guidance.

4. Use of Memory Sticks

All employees and contractors must ensure that USB memory sticks and other portable storage devices are only where specifically authorised by the Trust and where no secure cloud-based alternative exists.and must be encrypted and password-protected to safeguard personal data. The use of unencrypted or unauthorized devices is strictly prohibited. In the event that a memory stick or portable device containing personal data is lost, misplaced, or suspected to be compromised, it must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) or designated authority. Such incidents will be assessed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and if deemed a notifiable breach, will be reported to the supervisory authority within 72 hours, as required under Article 33 of the GDPR.

5. Lock Screen

To prevent unauthorised access, all users are required to lock their screens whenever they step away from their device, even for a short period. This simple precaution helps safeguard confidential information and ensures compliance with our Trust's data protection policies.

Failure to adhere to these protocols may result in disciplinary action and increased risk to the Trust security.

6. General Behaviours.

Staff must not use inappropriate or offensive language at any time.

All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect.

Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in schools. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, partners, pupils and parents.

School staff are expected to uphold the policies, values and ethos of the Trust and the individual school they work at.

Staff are expected to uphold the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

Please see further information in the Conduct Guidance for Staff in Appendix 1.

7. Dress code

As a general principle, staff should dress according to their professional judgement, unless this is detrimental to their capacity to do their job or is deemed unsafe or inappropriate for some other good reason. Employees should dress in a way that presents the school and Trust in a positive and professional manner.

No aspect of an employee's dress or appearance should be politically motivated, sexually provocative, discriminatory, insensitive or offensive. Staff should ensure clothing is professional, appropriate for a primary school environment and suitable for their duties taking into consideration forwhat a child can see, in terms of skirt length and the exposure of the chest area.

Jewellery and piercings should not be worn excessively nor amount to an unacceptable risk to either the employee or to the pupil.

Staff to be conscious of health and safety when choosing appropriate footwear. Open toed high heeled shoes, backless footwear and flip-flops are worn at the risk of each individual.

Tattoos displaying offensive, discriminatory, extremist or inappropriate imagery must be covered whilst at work..

Hair should be kept tidy and nails should be kept at a length where they are unlikely to amount to a risk to cause harm to pupils.

Dress codes may be relaxed in certain circumstances such as outdoor/adventure visits, training days and charity days - in these circumstances, common sense should prevail at the Headteachers/Line Manager's discretion.

All staff will be supplied with a school identity security badge that should be worn and visible at all times both when in school or outside the premises on school business and should only be removed for safety reasons. Staff working within the community must carry their school ID badges with them at all times. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform their manager if their ID badge is lost/stolen or if details on the badge need altering e.g. for a name change.

Staff should ensure that they are dressed safely and appropriately for tasks they undertake and wear clothing appropriate to their work area. If you are supplied with a uniform or protective clothing for your role then you must wear these whilst carrying out your duties. Facilities staff may wear practical clothing as appropriate to their role as determined and provided by the school.

8. Pupil Development

Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.

Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

9. Honesty and Integrity

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 property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree, accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should follow the Whistleblowing procedure for schools, which incorporates our duty under the Public Disclosure Act.

All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of school that may be connected either to the supply of goods/services to the school or that may be rewarded through association with the school.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interest is a very serious breach of trust and

therefore if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to take advice from their school or union.

Gifts received must be declared to the Headteacher who will ensure any requirements within the Gifts and Hospitality Policy are adhered to and reported to the Central Team where appropriate.

Adults need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or "groom" a young person. If gifts are given this should be done openly and not based on favouritism. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

Methods of selection and exclusion of pupils for school teams, productions, trips etc. must always be subject to clear, agreed criteria.

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsified records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

All school employees must comply with the Trust Financial Regulations.

10. Alcohol and other substances

Staff will not use illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours; this is unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the school or Trust's reputation and public confidence. This may also lead to disciplinary action.

10.1. Medication

Safe storage of staff personal medication is advised to avoid any access by young people. Staff should inform the Headteacher if their medication impacts in any way on their work in school.

11. School equipment and resources

School equipment and systems (e.g. phone, email and computers / tablets) are available only for school related activities and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use. This is unless authorised by the Headteacher.

Employees must not use their own personal equipment such as mobile phones or cameras to make recordings of pupils, parents or other employees. School equipment is available on request where school related, appropriate recordings need to be made.

Storage of sensitive school information on personal computers is not permitted. If transporting data linked to pupils on USB etc. these must be provided by school, secure and encrypted. CCLT Google drives should be used as a safe mechanism to store or share photos and other sensitive information within schools and across the Trust.

12. Conduct outside Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.

In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or behaviours that involve possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must familiarise themselves with the online safety policy and sign the Safe Internet User agreement.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use personal means to contact parents/pupils or former pupils.

Staff must not engage in the use of internet or social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Social Media should be used responsibly, and colleagues should ensure that anything published does not bring the Trust into disrepute or constitute bullying or harassment of a colleague. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal. Staff should avoid posting content that could reasonably undermine public confidence in their professional role. If a colleague sees something on social media posted by a colleague which they are uncomfortable with because it breaches this Code of Conduct, they should report this to the Headteacher.

The Trust expects colleagues to follow its ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. It is important that colleagues maintain a professional digital footprint and think very carefully and be cautious about their "likes" and sharing of material via social media – taking care not to distribute material produced, supported or promoted by radical political groups that are at odds with our values and principles.

Staff must only use their school email account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues for school related business.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school and is not to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance

Members of staff may come into contact with pupils in social settings and it is important that staff recognise that their professional role does not just finish at the school gate. This is not to say that staff must ignore pupils in social settings but they should be mindful of how their behaviour towards pupils in such a setting may be interpreted.

Members of staff should understand that the behaviour and actions of their partner (or other family members) may raise questions about their suitability to work with children and young people.

School employees must inform the Headteacher (Governing Body and CEO if the employee is the Headteacher) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Headteacher or Governing Body and CEO, will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children and other employees at the school.

Employees must inform the Headteacher immediately if they are involved with any child protection incidents or issues regarding their own children or those of other colleagues. If a referral has not already been made, it must be actioned.

13. Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil. Staff must handle all personal, sensitive and confidential information in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Confidential information must only be accessed, used or shared where there is a legitimate professional need to do so. Staff should take particular care when discussing confidential matters to ensure conversations cannot be overheard by unauthorised individuals, whether on school premises or elsewhere. Confidential or personal information must only be shared using approved Trust systems and school email accounts, and staff must not send such information using personal email accounts or messaging applications. Staff must not photograph, copy or retain confidential documents on personal devices. All confidential records, whether electronic or paper-

based, must be stored securely and disposed of in accordance with the Trust's records management and data protection procedures. Any actual or suspected data breach, loss of information or unauthorised disclosure must be reported immediately in line with the Trust's Data Protection and Information Security procedures.

14. Disciplinary Action

15. All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct will result in disciplinary action, with the potential for dismissal. Related policies

Please note this policy ***must*** be used in conjunction with the current Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

- Trust Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Standing Financial Instruction
- ICT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection / GDPR Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Prevent Duty / Prevention of Radicalisation
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy

16. Appendix 1 – Conduct Guidance for all Staff

When we speak to others we will:

- Use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- Use a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable, except where a raised voice may be necessary to urgently intervene if children's safety is threatened.
- Avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem.
- Speak respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- Staff should avoid engaging in gossip, speculation or conversations that undermine colleagues, pupils or parents.We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- Work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- Work within the school's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the Governors.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Dress appropriately, so that we set a good example for the children and to show that we are here to work.
- Behave in a positive way in front of the children, despite any personal problems that we may have.

17. Appendix 2 - From Teachers Standards Effective from 1 September 2012 (DfE) Personal and Professional Conduct

- A teacher is 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 throughout a teacher's career.
- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school by;
- Treating all pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, 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 the personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.