Staff Code of Conduct

Audience:	REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees Agency Staff Directly Engaged Contractors Volunteers
Ratified:	REAch2 Finance and Resources Committee May 2024
Other related policies:	Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Data Protection Policy Disciplinary Policy Gifts, Hospital and Anti-Bribery Policy Expenses Policies Health & Safety Policy Information Security Policy Safeguarding Policy Speak Up and Whistleblowing Policy
Policy owner:	Sue Northend, Director of HR
Review:	May 2027

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.

Leadership
Finding the leader in all of us.

Inclusion
Realising the greatness in our difference.

Learning
Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.

Enjoyment
Loving what we do.

Inspiration
Feeling the power of the possible.

Integrity
Being courageously true to our purpose.

Responsibility
Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

Policy Overview

Overarching Principles

REAch2 expects the highest standards of personal and professional conduct from all staff. As such the Trust, requires all staff to act in a manner which reflects the value and ethos of the Trust.

This policy explains the Trust's expectations with regards to staff conduct in the following areas:

- Professional Conduct
- Safeguarding Pupils
- Use of ICT and Social Media

Intended Impact

Whilst it is not possible to provide examples of what is or is not appropriate behaviour and conduct in all circumstances, this Code of Conduct is intended to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff are expected to observe. All staff are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within the Trust.

Scope

This Code applies to all staff, including volunteers, governors, trainee teachers, agency staff and directly engaged contractors, who for the purposes of this policy shall be collectively referred to as staff.

All staff must read, and if necessary seek clarification to understand the Code, as everyone is required to comply with it.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employee's responsibilities

- To read, understand and comply with the Code of Conduct at all times;
- To use this code, alongside other relevant school policies and professional codes, to guide them in their role;
- To seek guidance from their line manager if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them;
- To alert their line manager, at the earliest opportunity, if they are aware that they have conducted themselves in a way which may have breached the expected standards of conduct.

Line Manager's responsibilities

- To ensure that all staff understand the Code of Conduct and know where to find it;
- To provide additional advice and guidance to staff in relation to queries they have regarding the application of the Code of Conduct;
- To coach, support and provide feedback to staff on their performance in relation to the required standards of conduct;

- To take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to address breaches of the expected standards of conduct.

Policy In Detail

Professional Conduct Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work.

Staff should not behave in a manner which would call into question their motivation or intentions. During the course of their work, staff should ensure they do not:

- Willfully provide false / misleading information.
- Destroy or alter information / records without proper authorisation.
- Withhold information or conceal matters which they could reasonably be expected to have disclosed.
- Misrepresent the Trust, their school or their position.
- Accept or offer any form of bribe / inducement or engage in any other corrupt working practice.

Should a staff member become aware of any conduct on the part of a colleague which raises concerns regarding health and safety, safeguarding or criminal activity, they have a duty to disclose this. The REAch2 Speak Up and Whistleblowing Policy should be followed in these situations.

Setting an Example

Trust staff are role models and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils

within the Trust's schools and is appropriate in a school setting.

This includes:

- Refraining from abusive or potentially offensive / discriminatory language or actions.
- Demonstrating tolerance and respect towards others.
- Guarding themselves against criticism or suspicion by maintaining professional boundaries with pupils both inside and outside of school.
- Ensuring any topics of conversation with pupils are suitable to the school setting / curriculum.
- Not undermining fundamental British values and refraining from allowing personal / political opinions to impact on the discharge of duties and/or unduly influence pupils.
- Maintaining high standards of personal presentation, attendance and punctuality.

The Trust recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for all staff, pupils, parents and visitors who attend Trust premises. Staff are responsible for ensuring their health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. Staff are required to familiarise themselves with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy.

Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, colleagues, or the business and operation of the Trust as part of their job role. Such information must not be disclosed to any person who is not entitled to have access to this or legitimately needs it for work purposes.

Staff must work in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and associated legislation. Staff must not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff should never remove confidential information off site without the express consent of a member of the senior leadership team, preferably in writing. This includes but is not limited to marking, tests, personnel folders and financial reports.

If staff are authorised to take documentation or equipment off site, then it is their responsibility to ensure that such items are kept secure at all times and not for e.g. left in a car when parked or overnight. Failure to comply with this duty, could result in disciplinary action being taken up and to including dismissal from employment.

When staff cease working for the Trust, staff must still respect the confidentiality of official information that may have been available to staff in the course of their duties and not use this information for private, commercial or political gain.

Criminal Charges and Convictions

Staff must notify their line manager in writing immediately if they are charged or convicted of any offence. This will not necessarily result in disciplinary action as each case will be appropriately risk assessed and judged on its own merits.

Professional Relationships

REAch2 expects staff to maintain positive and professional working relationships. Colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders should be treated with dignity and respect.
Staff should be polite and courteous in their interactions with parents / pupils and other stakeholders / members of the school community.

Behaviour which constitutes bullying and harassment, intimidation, victimisation, discrimination or abuse of authority will not be tolerated and may be addressed via the Trust's disciplinary policy. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, pupils and parents.

Personal Relationships

The Trust recognises that staff who work together may form personal friendships and in some cases close personal relationships. While it does not wish to interfere with these personal relationships, it is necessary to ensure that all staff behave in an appropriate and professional manner at work.

Any member of staff who is involved in a close personal relationship with a colleague, contractor or supplier must declare this to their line manager and not allow that relationship to influence their conduct while at work.

Dress and Presentation

Staff are expected to take a safe and sensible approach to dress and appearance, cleanliness and personal hygiene and must present a positive image of the Trust and should act as a role model for pupils.

Where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be worn as required.

Staff are encouraged to take a sensible approach to the suitability of 'work wear' in relation to the activity being undertaken.

Some schools may have their own locally agreed convention e.g.: 'JEANS Friday'. Further information can be found in each school's respective handbook.

REAch2 recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach where this affects dress and uniform requirements.

Identification Badge

Staff are required to wear their Identification (ID) Badge at all times while they are on any REAch2 school. All staff are required to challenge anyone in a Rach2 school without either an Employee ID or Visitor's Badge. Staff must not allow any individual not displaying an ID Badge to follow ("tailgate") them into any REAch2 school. Such instances must be report immediately if they occur. If staff come into a Reach2 school without their ID Badge, they must report this immediately and use a temporary replacement.

Alcohol/Drugs/Smoking

Alcohol and non-prescription drugs must not be consumed during working hours including when supervising pupils on school trips. For the purposes of this Code, "over the counter' medication is excluded. However, staff are required to notify their line manager if they have any concerns about their ability to perform their duties whist taking any prescription drug.

Smoking (or the use of electronic/vape equipment) is prohibited in a ReAch2 school and this includes the car parks and recreational areas.

Staff must not smoke around school entry points during school hours or in view of pupils. No smoking is permitted near to vents, intakes or areas that might cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties. It is for the Headteacher, supported by the Head of Estates and Facilities and the Deputy Director of Education, to define these areas. The Trust's No Smoking Policy sets out the Trust's position in more detail.

Arrival at work under the influence of non-prescription drugs or alcohol is a disciplinary matter which will be dealt with under REAch2's Disciplinary Policy.

Mobile Phones

It is understood that staff may need to make personal calls, check text messages and/or personal emails in an emergency or during break times. Staff must not let their personal use interfere with their work commitments.

Staff should set an example and should never use their own mobile telephones or other electronic devices whilst they are on duty (whether in a classroom or otherwise) and any such mobile devices should be switched to silent and be kept out of sight of pupils.

Use of Trust Property, Facilities and Equipment

REAch2 schools are to be used for Trust business and for no other use, unless explicitly permitted by a line manager. Reasonable personal use of telephones, photocopiers, computers and internet is allowed provided there is no detrimental impact upon performance and confidentiality.

Conduct outside of the workplace

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work that could seriously damage the reputation and standing of REAch2 / a school, their own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school / REAch2 community.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or REAch2 into disrepute. Staff are prohibited from forming friendships with pupils on social networks.

Staff should not contact students outside of official working hours or school approved extra-curricular activities unless in exceptional circumstances and only via work issued communication equipment (e.g., a company mobile phone or work email account). Staff should never contact pupils via a private/personal phone, by letter, and/or email account or any other electronic medium.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust nor be to a level that may contravene the working time regulations or affect their work performance.

Work Related Social Events

Although work related social events usually take place away from the Trust and on occasion, outside of normal working hours, this code of conduct applies to such events. Staff must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring the Trust's name into disrepute.

Gifts, Hospitality & Expenses

All staff must ensure they do not compromise their position by observing REAch2's Grifts, Hospitality and Anti-Bribery Policy.

REAch2 has a zero-tolerance approach towards fraud and all staff must comply with the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption and Expenses Policies

Allegations concerning fraudulent, dishonest or corrupt practices or the falsification may be addressed as a disciplinary matter.

Safeguarding Pupils General Obligations

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from:
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Radicalisation

All staff must ensure they have read, understood and comply with Part 1 Keeping Children Safe in Education and the REAch2's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with pupils.

Staff are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. In order to protect both children and themselves, staff should also avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others.

Low-level Concerns

All staff must be alert to occasions, no matter how small, causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' that an adult working in or on behalf of REAch2 may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and/or;
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance describes such occasions as low level concerns. Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs;
- 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;
- humiliating pupils.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the REAch2's safeguarding procedures. Staff are encouraged to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If unsure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, staff are encouraged to report it and all reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Allegations Against Members of Staff

All staff have a duty to report to their Headteacher / Line Manager (for Shared Services staff) at the earliest opportunity the conduct of a colleague which may place a child at risk.

Where the conduct relates to a Headteacher, this should be reported to the Deputy Director of Education who will update the Chair of Governors if appropriate to do so. Failure to report such conduct may be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

E–Safety

Whilst at work or using a work device all staff must:

- Not use work IT equipment to browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any material / images which is illegal, sexually explicit, obscene or could offend, harass or upset others or anything which could bring an employee's professional role or the school or Trust into disrepute;
- Not use personal IT equipment to browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any materials / images which are illegal or could offend or harass others or anything which could bring an employee's professional role or the school or REAch2 into disrepute.

All Trust IT devices and systems are subject to monitoring and filtering.

Staff should refer to the Information Security Policy for further guidance on ICT policy and procedures.

Use of Social Media

Staff must ensure that their online presence / profile is compatible with their professional role. All staff should:

- Ensure appropriate privacy settings are applied when using social media sites;
- Refrain from sharing confidential / privileged information, discussing incidents, operational or employment matters or making critical / negative comments about the school / REAch2 / pupils / parents or colleagues on such forums;
- Not browse, create, transmit, display, publish, comment on or forward any material / images which are illegal, could offend or harass or anything which could bring a staff's professional role or the school or REAch2 into disrepute;
- Never share / post images of pupils;
- Not post images of work colleagues without permission.

Policy Review

The Staff Code of Conduct will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, taking into account any legislative changes.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.