



Staff Code of Conduct Including Staff Expectations

Reviewed September 2024

Next review due September 2025

**Preston Primary Academy Trust
Code of Conduct**

This policy has been written with the underlying principles of a Church of England school, which applies to Preston C of E Primary School, Ash C of E Primary School, and North Cadbury C of E Primary School.

Being the best, we can be

1. Introduction

The reputation of the Trust and its schools and the trust and confidence of the community in their integrity is of vital importance. Schools must discharge their day-to-day responsibilities with openness and honesty. This code of conduct is presented to assist staff employed in its schools and volunteers (including directors and governors) in carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities in accordance with legal requirements placed upon them and any policies adopted by the Trust and its schools.

2. Status of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Trust working within its schools and those individuals volunteering within its schools. Throughout the document, reference is made to employees referring or reporting issues to the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors. Where the employee is the Head Teacher they should refer or report issues to the Chair of Governors.

3. General

Employees and volunteers in schools should remember their responsibilities to the local community and adopt a courteous, high quality, efficient and impartial approach to all groups and individuals with whom they come into contact in the course of their work. Such courtesy and efficiency should be shown to all people with whom employees and volunteers deal remembering that all opportunities need to be taken to enhance the reputation of the school whether locally, nationally, or internationally.

Employees and volunteers in schools must carry out their duties objectively, professionally, to the best of their ability and in an impartial manner. Employees and volunteers in schools are entitled to expect that no other colleague or governor will seek to pressure or persuade them to carry out their duties in any other way. Where it is alleged that such action has taken place, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors will investigate the allegation if requested to do so.

There may be occasions when employees, carrying out their duties for a school, find themselves at odds with national government advice or guidance. In such circumstances, it is particularly important that they are seen to behave with complete objectivity and impartiality obtaining managerial and professional advice and guidance

where appropriate. They are entitled to expect to receive the unequivocal support of senior managers in so doing.

As a general rule of thumb, employees and volunteers in our schools should act in accordance with three key guiding principles:

- Ensure that their conduct complies with these standards, the spirit of these standards, the school's policies and the law.
- Ensure that their conduct is never influenced by personal gain.
- Ensure that their conduct could not give any reasonable person cause to question their motives.

4. Confidentiality & Openness

As employees and volunteers within the school, individuals may be privy to information which is confidential. Any express or implied responsibility to keep information confidential should be respected by employees and volunteers and there should be awareness that such responsibility might arise from the nature of the information itself, e.g. child protection disclosure. It will, however, be extremely rare that employees and volunteers will be unable to share confidences with either the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors.

Employees and volunteers should not use information obtained in the course of their time at a school for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. When employees and volunteers are acquainted with confidential information belonging to the school, they must not disclose that information to any person not authorised to receive it unless such material must by law be made available to specific parties e.g. in child protection cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Police or Social Services and disclosure of financial information to Internal or External Auditors.

5. Relationships

Mutual respect between directors, governors and staff is essential to good management. Close personal familiarity between individual directors/governors and employees should be avoided wherever possible, as it can be detrimental to the relationship and prove embarrassing to other directors/governors and employees.

Employees and directors/governors will ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit and in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. Merit is determined on the basis of matching the chosen candidate with a job specification and ignoring all other extraneous considerations, e.g. close personal relationships with

directors/governors or other employees. Employees in the course of their duties should not be involved in the appointment, pay adjustment, approval of expenses, promotion or discipline of partners, relatives or close friends.

Close personal relationships between employees and/or directors/governors should not be permitted to influence decisions made and must be declared at the earliest opportunity.

Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. Employees and volunteers working within a school would be deemed to be in a position of trust and must conduct themselves in accordance with the statutory requirements of the guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE 2023) and must not engage in a staff/pupil relationship that extends beyond the professional requirements of their role in any circumstance. Employees and volunteers at the school are required to adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.

It should be noted that communicating with pupils who attend a school over social media could be viewed as developing / attempting to develop an inappropriate relationship. As such specific regard should be given to the school's ICT Acceptable User & Social Media Policy. As a general rule staff and volunteers should not engage in communication with pupils of the school over Social Media unless explicitly agreed by the school and for the purpose of fulfilling their professional duties. Any communication should remain professional in nature. If staff are unsure of the appropriateness of any communication, they should discuss this with the Head Teacher.

Relationships with contractors or potential contractors who are engaged or may be engaged to carry out work at the school should be made known and in the case of governors, an interest declared to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors in accordance with the legal requirements in respect of declaring financial interest.

6. **Political Neutrality**

All employees and volunteers within schools are required to be politically neutral and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with the way in which they carry out their work or duty to implement the policies.

Under the Education (No 2) Act 1986 schools and the Board of Directors and Head Teachers are required to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

7. **Personal Interests**

Employees must declare to Head Teachers and/or Chair of Governors financial and any other interests that they consider could bring about direct conflicts with their school's interests, including membership of any organisation not open to the public which requires of members any form of commitment or allegiance and which has secrecy about rules and membership or conduct.

8. Business or Financial Interests

Schools must keep a register of business and financial interests for staff and governors. The Directors' register is kept centrally. This register should be kept up to date and be freely available for inspection by governors, staff and parents and reviewed regularly. The register must include:

- directorships, partnerships and employments with businesses
- significant shareholdings or other appointments of influence within a business or other organisation which may have dealings with the school.
- trusteeships and governorships at other educational institutions and charities
- for each interest: the name and nature of the business, the nature of the interest and the date the interest began.

The register must also record relevant interests from close family relationships between the academy trust's members, trustees or local governors. It must also identify relevant interests arising from close family relationships between those individuals and employees.

We ask that as well as your own interest, you include those of any member of your immediate family (including partners) or other individuals known to you who may exert influence

9. Other Employment

The Board of Directors will not unreasonably stop employees from undertaking additional employment, but such employment must not, in the view of their school, conflict with or act in a way which is detrimental to the school's interest or have the effect of weakening public confidence in the proper conduct of the school.

The Head Teachers, Directors and Governors expect that all staff employed in schools will give full commitment to the school whilst employed there and will not take up other employment which may directly impact on their ability to fulfil their contractual requirements.

10. Gifts & Hospitality

A potential source of conflict between private and public interests is the offer of gifts, hospitality or benefits in kind to employees in connection with their official duties.

Apart from the exceptions listed below, an employee or volunteer within in a school should refuse any personal gift offered to him or her or to any family member by any person or organisation who is involved with the school. Any such offer should be reported to the Head Teacher or to the Chair of Governors if the offer is to the Head Teacher.

The exceptions are:

- (a) gifts of a token value often given at Christmas time such as diaries, confectionery, calendars, pens etc. or by children at Christmas or the end of an academic/term year or after a particular event;
- (b) gifts of a promotional nature on the conclusion of any courtesy visit to/by a business or organisation of a sort normally given by that firm.

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality including invitations to functions, meals and site visits if there is a genuine need to impart or receive information or represent the school and/or the community, e.g. careers events. Offers to attend social or sporting functions at another's expense should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the school should be seen to be represented perhaps including occasions when a genuine business benefit may be obtained by the school as a result. Such visits for school staff should be properly authorised by the Local Governing Body and recorded on a maintained register e.g. Log Book, Local Governing Body minutes and must not be excessive in the context of the occasion or the justification for attendance. If an employee is in any doubt about the propriety of accepting a gift, advice should be sought from the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors

Employees of the school should not accept significant personal gifts, services or other benefits from contractors and service providers such as drink, cars, holidays, tickets etc. Where unsolicited gifts are received, they should be drawn to the attention of the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors who will keep a record of circumstances.

As well as receiving gifts, staff and volunteers should also be aware of the potential issues in relation to providing gifts to children. In normal circumstances gifts should not be given to individual children as this could, unintentionally, be viewed as extending or attempting to extend a relationship beyond the professional requirements of the role. As such, if you feel a gift is appropriate, explicit agreement should be gained from the Head Teacher with regards to the reason and nature of any gift.

11. Equal Opportunities

The Trust and its schools are committed to ensuring equal opportunities in employment and provision of education and believe that an effective equal opportunities policy is an essential means of increasing the value of its personnel by developing the potential of all its individual employees. The Trust's equal opportunities policies are designed to ensure that no employee or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment than another because of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. All employees and volunteers must comply with both the spirit and letter of the Equality Act and the school's equal opportunities policy and treat all members of the public and work colleagues with respect and fairness.

Employees and volunteers should be fully aware of the Trust's commitment to equal opportunities and the employment of disabled persons.

Employees should note that the following acts may be unlawful as well as constituting misconduct liable to disciplinary action (which could in some cases include summary dismissal):

1. Discriminating improperly in the course of their employment against members of the public, clients, stakeholders, fellow employees, job applicants or in respect of job transfer or promotion applications, because of a protected characteristic as listed above.
2. Instructing, causing or inducing, or attempting to induce, staff, volunteers and governors to practice unlawful discrimination.
3. Verbal or physical harassment of a nature that is offensive to the victim.
4. Victimising individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who have provided information about such discrimination or harassment.

For its part, the school will investigate any allegation of discrimination or harassment and will take action as appropriate.

12. **Health & Safety**

Preston Primary Academy Trust has a legal obligation to protect the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others in the workplace. Equally, employees should at all times be aware of and fulfil their legal responsibility to protect their own and others health, safety and welfare at work. This legal obligation is supported by the Trust's and school's health and safety policies

13. **Post-Employment**

The duty of fidelity which each employee owes to the Trust and which requires an employee to act in an honest fashion and not in a manner which will harm their school may, in certain respects, continue following the end of the employee's employment. For example, even though they are no longer employed by the Trust, a former employee must not disclose confidential information which belongs to one of its schools.

Certain employees may have access to intellectual property (such as copyright and materials which belong to the Trust or its schools). An employee might even have contributed to the creation of that intellectual property during a period of employment. However, where part or whole of that property belongs to the Trust or school it cannot be used by a former employee for any purpose without the agreement of the Trust or school as appropriate.

14. **Additional Requirement**

Although this code of conduct highlights overall expectations, staff are also expected to be aware of, and adhere to, other key legislation, professional standards, policies, procedures and guidance in order to effectively carry out their duties during the course of their employment. Of particular importance we would highlight the following documents and advise staff and volunteers to familiarise themselves with them where appropriate to their role:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2024) – All staff and volunteers must have at least read Section 1 of this document:
- Child Protection Policy
- Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- National Standards of Excellence for Head Teachers
- Teachers' Standards
- Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants (Non-Mandatory, Non-Statutory)
- Academy Trust Governance Guide
- ICT Acceptable User & Social Media Policy
- Dignity at Work Code of Practice

APPENDIX

School Staff Expectations

Vision and Values

Within our schools, Staff and Governors will provide the highest academic standards in a safe and caring environment. We will develop a love of learning to last our children throughout their lives. Our exciting curriculum and extra-curricular activities will broaden our children's horizons, giving them a greater sense of themselves and the importance of others as individuals.

We are committed to a strong partnership between home and school, secondary schools, the local community and industry in order to become centres of excellence. Such excellence not only applies to academic studies, but also sporting and creative pursuits and the recruitment of high-quality staff at all levels.

Our children will be known for their high standards of behaviour and their sense of citizenship within the community.

Our Key Values and Aims are to:

- Ensure outstanding teaching and a culture of high expectations and high attainment where all individuals reach their full potential and take pride in their achievements.
- Create a safe and stimulating environment, providing lifelong learning experiences which meet individual needs.
- Promote and develop spiritual, moral and cultural growth.
- Provide good examples that children will use as a reference for positive behaviour.
- Encourage all to care for and respect themselves, the local community and others.

Expectations

Our children will:

- Feel cared for and secure in school.
- Be proud of their school and their personal contributions to its success and the wider community.
- Have good self-esteem and confidence in their individual strengths.
- Be aware of their role in the wider community.

Our staff, directors and governors will:

- Be recognised for their hard work and commitment to benefit our children.
- Be known for their honesty, integrity, trust and fairness.
- Provide clarity and transparency in all that they are involved in.

Core Purpose

- To demonstrate belief in the potential of all pupils and develop them fully.
- To share accountability for the achievements of all pupils and the performance of the Academy.
- To uphold all school policies and follow all agreed procedures with consistency and care.
- To ensure all pupils behave in a manner consistent with the School's values.

Safeguarding

- Safety of our children is paramount and is a number one priority.
- Create a safe and welcoming environment where children can develop their skills and confidence.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone.
- Ensure that any teaching activities or events are managed to the highest possible safety standards (refer to risk assessment procedures).
- Treat all children with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage or religious belief.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns.
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involve parents and children appropriately.
- Record all concerns, including low level concerns, passing onto relevant members of staff (see safeguarding procedures).
- A low-level concern is any behaviour inconsistent with this staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, which does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime. Whistleblowing procedures are in place for concerns to be raised with the school's senior leadership team. Where staff feel unable to raise an issue or feel that their genuine safeguarding concerns are not being addressed NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH
- Staff members to follow up any conflict between pupils to reduce possibility of escalation.

Behaviour

- To maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity at all times.
- To provide excellent role models for pupils at all times; demonstrating the positive behaviour and characteristics expressed in our values and vision statement. To expect high levels of courtesy from the children at all times.

- To take responsibility for developing pupils' emotional wellbeing as well as nurturing their academic potential.
- To behave courteously, respectfully and professionally at all times, maintaining appropriate boundaries with pupils and parents/carers.
- Not to engage in any behaviour in or out of school which could bring the Academy into disrepute. This has implications for use of social networking sites.
- Not to reveal any confidential information to which they have access to anyone except colleagues who need to know.
- To ensure that our academies are non-smoking, gum-free and litter-free zones, and that there is no eating or drinking in corridors by staff or pupils.
- To be aware that inappropriate use of any social networking sites e.g. Facebook/Twitter may lead to disciplinary action.

Dress

- To dress professionally: shirt and tie for male staff, smart dress for female staff, no jeans, flip flops, trainers (except when teaching PE), revealing clothes etc.
- Teachers teaching PE should change at the break before the session and then again at the following break.
- Any tattoos should be hidden from view where possible.

Commitment and involvement

- To be on site in plenty of time to prepare for the day and to attend staff briefing. Also, to be punctual for all meetings and school events.
- To get to know the school's pupils and to take an interest in their lives beyond school through regular informal dialogue around school and when on duty, joining them for lunch in the dining area on occasions.
- To attend key whole-school events in the annual school calendar.
- Where possible to deliver or contribute to at least one extra-curricular or enrichment session for pupils each week during term time.

Routines

- To be welcoming towards parents and carers, encouraging communication and partnership, returning calls/emails as soon as possible - ideally on the same day and certainly within 24 hours on school days.
- To be on the playground every morning to bring the children promptly into class.
- To be punctual when undertaking all break-time and lunch-time duties.
- To sign out or inform office if leaving the site during the school day.
- Not to take School property with a value of (£100 +) off site without authorisation.
- To read staff notices at the start of every day and pass on notices to pupils and support staff as required.

- To use mobile phones only in staff areas (Staff room).
- To remain on school premises at the end of the day until a reasonable time (except in exceptional circumstances) in order that parents can speak to staff when needed.
- To address other members of staff by their title and surname in front of pupils.
- To wear ID at all times.
- To ensure activities outside of school (paid or unpaid) do not impact adversely on your ability to carry out your duties to the highest standards expected.

Personal Development

- To engage in all whole-staff CPD as well as personal CPD activities.
- To engage openly and positively in the School's Performance Management procedures.
- To admit when mistakes are made and to be open to advice. To reflect on how personal practice could be improved, maintaining professionalism at all times.
- When addressing issues, ensure these are only discussed with the relevant parties.

Staff Absence

- If staff are unable to work due to illness, they should inform the Head Teacher or the member of staff with responsibility for cover, and the school office via a telephone call as soon as possible, no later than 7:15 am (as this can make it difficult to acquire cover).
- All staff to complete a sickness form and possible return to work interview on return to school.
- Please refer to the School's Sickness and Absence Policy for further procedures regarding absence.