Orchard Lea Federation

Staff Code of Conduct

Every Child, Every Day

Date Approved by Governing Body: September 2025

Date for review by Governing Body: September 2026

Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of staff at the Orchard Lea Federation with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring.

The schools require that all staff have read and comply with the Code of Conduct. Where clarification is needed on any aspect of this document, this should be sought from the Executive Headteacher.

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the school disciplinary procedure. This document is available to all staff on the website as well as being provided on induction to all new members of staff. It needs to be read and refreshed each year. All staff need to sign to say they have read, understood and will abide by it.

The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and behaviour and in circumstances where guidance does not exist, individuals are expected to use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

This code of conduct needs to be read in conjunction with other policies/documents such as:

- Child Protection policy.
- Safeguarding policy.
- Whistleblowing policy.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- All members of staff, including teaching and support staff;
- Volunteers, including governors;
- Casual workers;
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training, and apprentices.

References to ‘staff’ throughout the Code of Conduct refer to all of the above groups.

Any links within this document to other documents are for ease of use and do not form part of this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct exists in addition to Hampshire County Council's Local Government Code of Conduct.

Professional Standards at work

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. The schools expect staff to treat each other, pupils, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times. Furthermore, staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the schools as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the school e.g. visitors.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of the children and young people at the schools are accorded the highest priority. In this and other ways staff should always maintain standards of conduct and behaviour which sustain their professional standing and that of the federation.

Safeguarding

Teachers are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the Teachers' Standards, including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The Orchard Lea Federation recognises its statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and understands that staff play a vital role in meeting these responsibilities. Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff must be aware of the school's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Staff have a professional duty to report concerns about the welfare of a child. Any such concerns must be raised without delay to the school's DSL. In the event that none of the above are available, staff should make a referral through an Interagency Referral Form (IARF). There should be no delay in reporting a concern if there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child. Staff are reminded of their duty to report safeguarding concerns about staff. Any concerns or allegations must be raised without delay to the school's DSL, the LADO or Chair of Governors. Low- level concerns must be raised as in the policy at the end of this document.

Staff should be familiar with the federation's child protection policy, which is available to all staff in the staffroom and on the website**.** All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction to the school.

In accordance with the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025) all staff are required to read Part One 'Safeguarding information for all staff' and will be provided with a copy as part of their induction to the school. The full document is available from www.gov.uk

Further information is found in the guidance document 'The avoidance of unnecessary contact and allegations' and in 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (May 2019) provided by the Safer Recruitment Consortium.

Appropriate behaviour with Pupils

Individuals who work or volunteer in a school environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the pupil's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. If physical contact is made to remove a pupil from a dangerous situation or an object from a pupil to prevent either harm to themselves or others, then this should be recorded on CPOMs and reported to the Executive Headteacher. In cases where accidental physical contact was made, it should be reported to the Executive Headteacher. In all cases staff should act in accordance with the school's restraint policy which can be found on the website.

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil, child or young person whether inside or outside of work is unacceptable. Staff are reminded that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 defines a child as everyone under the age of 18.

Relationships with Parents

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

Use of IT

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. School staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must not have any unauthorised contact or accept 'friend' requests through social media with any pupil (including former pupils and/or those who attend other schools) unless they are family members. Staff must exercise caution when having contact online through social media with parents so as not to compromise the school's reputation or school information.

Please refer to the school's acceptable use of ICT policy which can be found on the website and Social Media policy which can be found on the website for further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable use of IT, social media and mobile phones. Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used only in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy which can be found on the website.

Confidentiality

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Equally, staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

Dress and appearance

An individual's dress and appearance is a matter of personal choice; however, staff should ensure that they dress appropriately, modestly and safely for a school environment and for the role they undertake, as well as setting a good example to both pupils and visitors. This is a professional place of work and in accordance with this, staff must dress smartly. We would not expect a member of staff to come to work in clothing such as flip flops, crop tops, shorts, vest tops or very short skirts. In terms of hairstyles and jewellery, we expect staff to look professional and would expect any offensive tattoos to be covered.

Staff should have particular regard to the health and safety risks involved with certain lessons i.e. physical education/food technology and the need to dress appropriately and safely when undertaking these activities, such as wearing appropriate footwear, removing jewellery etc. All teaching staff have been provided with a school PE top and should role model wearing PE kits.

The schools recognise the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the schools.

Equality

The Governing Body of the federation is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the schools. It also recognises that all members of staff have the right to work in a safe environment without fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse.

All pupils, colleagues, parents, members of the public and wider school community have the right to be treated with fairness and equality and must not be discriminated against. The federation expects staff to uphold these principles.

Conduct outside of school

Care must be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside school and responsibilities within schools. In no case should actions or activities undertaken outside of work (including but not limited to relationships and social media contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults) bring either school into disrepute**.**

Staff must disclose any misconduct or alleged misconduct made against them, including any incidents arising from alternative or additional employment outside of this federation. Disclosure must be made to the Executive Headteacher without delay, after which consideration will be given to the relevance or otherwise of the misconduct to their role in the school.

Teachers are reminded that the Teachers' Standards, and specifically Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct, set out their responsibilities in relation to upholding public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.

In line with our Child Protection Policy, It is also important that staff disclose to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher any concerns about behaviour outside of school or within their immediate family that may impact on children.

Conflict of interests

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the Leadership any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with either school's activities, for example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to either school. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Executive Headteacher.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided it does not conflict with the interests of the schools nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work.

Raising concerns and whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as Whistleblowing. The Governing Body of the federation will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the school. Please refer to the school's Procedure for Protected Disclosures ("Whistleblowing") for further information which can be found on our website. Our child protection policy also outlines our procedures to deal with allegations against staff. Copies of this can be found on our website and in the staffroom.

In accordance with KCSIE 2025, staff need to pass any low-level concerns (LLCs) regarding staff conduct around children to the DSL (Headteacher). Staff will be informed of this at induction and through regular safeguarding updates throughout the year.

Health and Safety

Staff must adhere to the federation's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the school environment safe. Please refer to the federation's Health and Safety policy for further information which can be found on our website. Any initial concerns can be reported to or discussed with the Site Manager and Executive Headteacher.

Gifts and resources

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift. If a member of staff is given a gift card over the value of £30, we expect the member of staff to declare this to the Chair of Governors.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to individual pupils. However, small end of term gifts such as a pencil may be given to the whole class to the end of a term or school year.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

The use of federation resources, property and equipment is for school-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed.

All members of staff must use any public or school funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner.