



## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES**

### **1. PURPOSE**

This Code sets out the principles relating to the manner, approach and behaviours that should be observed by all employees of Ashcroft High School, in order to ensure conduct of the highest order and that pupils, parents, the community and colleagues have and maintain confidence and trust in the integrity of those working for the school. This Code has been adopted by the Governing Body, uses the framework agreed by the Council and commended to schools and forms part of the terms and conditions of service of employment of all employees in the school.

### **2. SCOPE**

The Code covers the following areas:

- General Principles
- Responsibilities of Employees
- General Standards in Dealing with People
- Equality of Opportunities for All
- Conflicts of Interests
- Awarding Contracts
- Hospitality and Acceptance of Gifts
- Commercial Confidentiality
- Criminal Offences
- Relationships with Pupils, Parents and Governors
- Child Protection
- Position of Trust
- Dress Code
- Sanctions for Breach of the Code

### **3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The adoption of an Employees' Code means that the standards and expectations of all school employees are transparent and equitable. The Employees' Code constitutes part of employees' terms and conditions of service, and will therefore be monitored and enforced, if necessary through normal procedural arrangements agreed by the Governing Body. This Code therefore, is designed to set out standards of conduct and behaviour in order that employees themselves and the school community can be sure of the parameters and standards required of employees in such a manner that there will be confidence and trust in the employee working practices.

This Code therefore identifies those key areas of conduct and behaviour, setting out standards and guidance for employees. It is supported by all employment procedures, protocols and the Staff Handbook as adopted by the Governing Body. The areas highlighted in this Code are not exhaustive, and employees should endeavour to be seen as setting the highest standards of conduct in a way that does not bring any disrepute on themselves as a school employee, the service they work within, or Ashcroft High School in general.

All employees in the school are undertaking a professional role to support the education of young people. As such they are all role models and are expected to act accordingly. This includes relationships and communication with colleagues and the school, adherence to the school's dress code, appropriate for the job, and activities in the community outside school.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are not placed in a position which risks, or appears to risk, conflict between their private interests and their contractual duties. It is for the employee always to be impartial and honest in the conduct of their official business and with their own dealings with the school, and to notify the Governing Body of any change in their circumstances/interests that may impact in any way upon their employment his/her private life/interests that may have a connection/bearing upon the job he/she does).

It is also the responsibility of the headteacher to monitor, where practical, that employees are conforming to this Code and to ensure that employees are fully aware of the contents.

Employees are subject to adherence to the school's policies and procedures, Financial Regulations and are expected to use any public funds that are entrusted to them in the best way possible for the school and its community.

#### **5. GENERAL STANDARDS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE**

In the course of carrying out their duties, employees are required and expected to treat all people, with whom they have dealings, in a courteous, polite, unbiased and respectful manner. It is recognised that given certain circumstances, there will be occasions where dialogue may become strained. Employees should then bring the discussion to a close and seek

support from the headteacher/colleagues in accordance with the relevant school procedure (e.g. Behaviour Policy, Complaints Procedure). Employees who are faced with abusive/violent situations are always advised, particularly where there is potential danger to themselves or others, to politely withdraw or disengage themselves from the situation.

Employees are required to maintain a good standard of dialogue and must refrain from using abusive, derogatory, offensive or socially unacceptable language in the course of their duties and dealings with people. In addition body language that may be construed as aggressive, threatening or offensive must be avoided at all times.

This Code must be read in conjunction with the school's disciplinary procedure that sets out standards that will be treated as misconduct and liable for action to be taken under that procedure.

## **6. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

Ashcroft High School are committed to ensuring people receive equal treatment in all aspects of service delivery and employment activities. Employees therefore, in any aspect of their work, must ensure that they treat no individual less favourably than any other. Both colleague employees, Luton's citizens and the general public must not be treated either less or more favourably than any other person. The school has separate and well laid out policies in respect of Equal Opportunities in general and in relation to harassment/discrimination there are procedures on grounds of gender, race, disability and sexual orientation which apply to all employees and which must be read in conjunction with this Code.

## **7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Conflict between the individual's responsibilities and the role as a paid employee of the school and their activities outside employment can arise, or can be perceived to arise by the public, whether or not these may be paid or unpaid activities.

## **8. AWARDING CONTRACTS**

Ashcroft High School wishes to ensure that in awarding contracts, fair and open competition prevails at all times - Contract Procurement Procedures available in Section 5 of the School Financial Handbook or on the LLL Grid, and through EU Directives on Public Purchasing for Works and Supplies. The Council/school also wishes to ensure that with all those who may be seeking to gain contracts with the Council/school are treated and considered equally and consistently throughout the whole process. This means therefore that: -

- No private, public or voluntary organisation or company which may bid for school business should be given any advantage over its competitors, such as advance notice of the school's requirements. This applies to potential contractors, whether or not there is a

relationship between them and the school, such as a long running series of contracts.

- Each new contract must be awarded on merit, taking into account the requirements of the school and the ability of the contractor to fulfil them.
- No special favour should be shown to current or former employees or their close relatives, friends or associates, or governors in awarding contracts to private or other businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or managerial capacity. Contracts may be awarded to such businesses where they are won in fair and open competition against other tenders or quotations, but scrupulous care must be taken to ensure that the selection process is conducted impartially, and that employees/governors who are known to have a relevant interest play no part in the selection.

Employees should ensure that where they believe that there may be a potential conflict of interest in the selection of any contractor, that they should inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors to determine/clarify the level of their involvement in the selection process.

Employees' attention is also drawn to the issue of influencing, or potentially attempting to influence, the decision as to whether a person who is related, or known to an employee, is offered a contract of employment with the school. In the event that a relative applies for a post with the school, the applicant must record their relationship as a part of the application form. Likewise the employee is required to inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors in writing of his/her relationship and should ensure that they do not take part in, or attempt to influence in any way, the selection recruitment process. Employees are advised, that where anyone who is "closely" known to them outside of the school, applies for a post within the school, that they should not become involved in any way with the selection process for that particular post.

## **9. HOSPITALITY AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

Recognising that the interest of the school must remain paramount at all times and that employees should not use their official position for private gain, employees should not accept gifts, inducements or promotional offers for their personal use or that of colleagues. Casual gifts from students or offered by contractors or others, for example at Christmas or the end of term time, which may not in any way be connected with the performance of duties so as to constitute an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts, need not necessarily be refused, but if there is any concern that the donor (for example a parent, supplier or contractor) may be trying to gain favour then they should be politely and firmly refused or employees should seek guidance from their headteacher.

Employees should not, for personal gain or benefit, solicit, accept or request payment by way of money, goods, services, discounts or any other means from any council contractor, supplier or a member of the public. Nor should an employee accept or request payment from any student at the school,

unless this arrangement is agreed by the headteacher/Governing Body and is for the financial benefit of the school.

No employee is entitled to retain on a personal basis any goods, gifts, money or service discounts which are a normal purchase or promotional offer to the school. Where gifts are received which are the subject of a normal purchase or promotional offer, or where a gift is made and the donor refuses to take the gift back, these must be reported immediately to the headteacher. These may then support school fundraising. The employee must ensure that these gifts have been recorded as received in the appropriate "Gifts and Hospitality" record book held within the school.

Any employee who is approached by a firm offering inducements, or who believes that they have inadvertently committed the school contractually for supplies and services that are not in the best interests of the school, must immediately notify the headteacher.

Modest hospitality provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances, for example lunches and/or dinners in the course of working visits, conferences or professional gatherings may be acceptable. However employees should decline all other offers of gifts, hospitality or entertainment and must be alert not to jeopardise any decisions that they take, which may conflict with or be detrimental to the school's interest. Any hospitality received must be recorded in the "Gifts and Hospitality" record book held within the school. If any employee is unsure whether the acceptance of hospitality is likely not to be in the school's interest they should seek the advice of the headteacher in the first instance.

Hospitality which is lavish, extravagant or which exceeds modest proportions must always be refused even if it appears acceptable.

The school's delegated budget must not be used for hospitality which is lavish, extravagant or exceeds modest proportions. The Governing Body has agreed parameters within which the headteacher may take financial decisions. Any employee likely to incur such expenditure must seek the approval of the headteacher first. Any expenditure outside the limit set by the Governing Body must be referred to the appropriate committee of the Governing Body for ratification.

## **10. COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees must not make public, without the express agreement of the headteacher/Chair of Governors as part of the normal processes of the school, any internal information that they may be aware of as part of their employment with the Council, whether or not this is for personal gain, or the personal or financial gain of others. This is particularly important where it may prejudice the principle of a purchasing or a contracting system based on fair competition. Employees are also bound by the Data Protection Act in not releasing to a third party, other than for internal purposes as part of normal work requirements, any information held in respect of any employee or person who has dealings with the Council for any reason.

## 11. CRIMINAL OFFENCES

In many instances the conviction of an employee for a criminal offence remains a matter between the individual and the Criminal Justice System. In respect of teachers such convictions may be notified to the General Teaching Council. However certain crimes or the fact that they have been committed by certain employees do have a direct or indirect impact on individuals' employment with the school which either constitutes a conflict of interest or brings the school into disrepute or renders continuing employment in the job unlawful.

Examples of crimes that are likely to fall into this category include:

- any crime against Luton Borough Council ,e.g. Housing Benefit fraud, damage to the Council's property, or abuse of, or assault upon any Council employee (whether or not they are undertaking their duties at the time)
- any crime involving dishonesty/fraud if the employee's post involves responsibilities for budgets/cash/non-cash monies/ assets or where s/he has access to vulnerable people in a lone-working situation or manages contracts
- any crime or spent crime if the employee is working directly with, or has regular unsupervised contact with children or young people under 18 years of age. (Note: disclosing all convictions does not necessarily mean action will be taken against the employee, as it will need to be viewed against the relevance or otherwise for the employee to be considered suitable to continue to undertake the particular job).
- crimes of assault where the employee is working directly with vulnerable clients
- any crime that is deemed to bring the school into disrepute

This list of examples is not exhaustive.

Employees **must** inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors as soon as they are arrested/ convicted of such crimes and if arrested, must notify the headteacher/Chair of Governors.

In addition, employees should always notify the headteacher/Chair of Governors if there is any doubt as to whether or not they fall into such a category.

Where it is deemed that there is an adverse impact on their employment, the school's disciplinary procedure will be invoked. The school will not wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.

## 12. UNDERTAKING WORK OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL/COUNCIL

Members of the Leadership Group must obtain the consent of the Governing Body to undertake external professional duties – for example External Adviser for Performance Management, teaching consultancy, Ofsted Inspection, Accreditation Assessment. The Governing Body will determine any limitation on such tasks and make it clear when this may enhance an employee's remuneration or when this will support income generation for the school.

### **13. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS, PARENTS AND GOVERNORS**

Employees are required to maintain professional relationships at all time, adhering to the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body. Employees with a grievance against a work colleague or manager will not seek to influence the outcome by making advance representations to the Governing Body but will follow the procedure adopted by the Governing Body. The use of the internet, mobile phones, e-mail and texting will always take into account the professional parameters of the role and its engagement with young people. The following school policies will apply:

- Internet and e-mail
- Social media

### **14. CHILD PROTECTION**

There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

- To take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised and
- To take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

The school has adopted a Whistleblowing Procedure which enables workers in the school to report concerns, including those relating to child protection issues. Failure by workers in the school to report abuse, or suspected abuse, in accordance with this procedure, may constitute a breach of the 'duty of care'. Staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to the headteacher or to the Chair of governors if the concern is about the headteacher.

Failure to carry out duties in compliance with arrangements made by the governing body will invoke the school's disciplinary procedure.

### **15. POSITION OF TRUST**

A relationship of power and trust exists between all staff and pupil, their families or carers. Employees represent the powers and duties of the school. They are placed in a position of trust to assist in the delivery of education to pupils who may be vulnerable. It is the responsibility of all

staff to ensure they do not abuse or appear to abuse that position of trust in the way they conduct their relationships with families or carers. Relationships that are thought to be at risk of, or have already extended beyond, what may be considered professional are not acceptable.

The key characteristic of the professional relationship is that the sole objective is meeting the assessed needs of pupils within agreed school policies that prevail at any given time. At no point must needs of the employee, unrelated to professional practice, take precedence. Emotional involvement or behaviour that is, or may be seen to be (by the general public), primarily in employee interests, rather than meeting the assessed needs of service users, may be defined as extending beyond the professional role.

Unless there is sound reason to do so, and the action is taken with the express knowledge and approval of the headteacher, and the decision is officially recorded:

- an employee must not make personal arrangements to see service users, their carers or families outside directed or contracted hours
- an employee must not take, their carers or families to their home
- an employee must not give their telephone number or address to students, their carers or families
- an employee must neither sell nor buy property from students, their families or carers.

Some examples of specific behaviour that will not be allowed and which may lead to disciplinary action include:

- sexual contact
- lending/borrowing money or property
- witnessing wills or acting as a named executor
- arranging extra help for a fee
- giving or receiving gifts

Whether motivated by a desire to support students, or less well intentioned or illegal motives, all such behaviour presents a risk to the professional relationship.

This position of trust also has consequences for actions and behaviours outside of working hours. If employees are engaging in activity or associating with individuals or people, whose current or past behaviours could raise doubts or concerns about an employee's own integrity or ability to be in a 'position of trust' with regard to children this could have a direct consequence on their ability to continue in employment/role.

One example could be where an employee working with children, has a current relationship with an individual, or is known to associate with individuals, who have convictions for child abuse. The employer may not have raised any concern regarding their activity at work but their out of work relationships would call into question their position of trust and may be considered as bringing the school into disrepute.



It is difficult to give the full list of potential conflict of interest, but the simple test is to ask the question:

“if this issue became public knowledge could it raise questions about my integrity and could it bring the council into disrepute?”

If the answer is “yes” or “possibly” or “I’m not sure” the employee is obliged to raise it with the headteacher so that this matter can be given further consideration

## **16. USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Facilities that are provided by the school and used by employees as part of their normal duties, must not be used, or abused by employees for their own private benefit or gain. This will cover all school property, for example telephones, computers, vehicles, safety equipment/clothing, tools, fax machines, franking machines, paper. etc. School property should not be taken home, or taken away from the normal place of work, unless prior permission has been given by an employee’s immediate supervisor/manager or unless these are acceptable resources to fulfil the contractual requirements of the job at home (for example planning, preparation and marking). This school anticipates the following resources may be used at home

- Laptop computer (where issued)
- Text books
- iPad (where issued)

Arrangements do exist, for employees in certain situations and without overly abusing the privilege, to use school telephones to make private calls.

## **17. DRESS CODE**

Following consultation with staff the school has agreed the following dress code as appropriate, in a professional capacity. This takes into account equality legislation.

At Ashcroft we demand the highest standards of ourselves in relation to appearance. We must be seen by students, parents and governors as positive role models. Within this context it is important that our dress and appearance are of a highly professional manner, in order to establish high standards as the norm within Ashcroft. Our students deserve this from us, because they are worth it.

Ashcroft staff dress in a smart professional business-like way. All staff should appear as positive role models to students at all times.

Male staff must wear a shirt and tie with a suit or trousers and jacket. For women, skirts must be below the knee and above the ankles. Tops must cover the chest, shoulders and armpits, and must not show cleavage. Jeans, leggings, shorts and denim wear are not appropriate.

Smart shoes/sandals are to be worn; flip-flops and slip-on sandals are not appropriate.

Staff teaching certain practical subjects will dress appropriately for lessons during the teaching day, as agreed with the Headteacher, and will adopt the above dress code for formal school occasions.

## **18. SANCTIONS FOR THE BREACH OF THE CODE**

This Code of Conduct forms part of all employee's terms and conditions of appointment. Any breach of this Code therefore will be dealt with under the school's agreed disciplinary procedures, and may, subject to the seriousness of the breach, lead to a dismissal from the school. In cases where the breach is the subject of police investigation, the school will not wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.

## **19. WHERE TO OBTAIN FURTHER ADVICE**

Any queries in respect of this Code should be raised with the headteacher or business manager

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Governors' Committee	Full Governing Body
SLT staff responsible	Ms M Austin
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