Pathway Trust

Code of Conduct

Policy effective from	1 September 2026
Policy owner	Director of People
Policy applies to	Berrow Church Primary School Burnham-on-Sea Infant School Castle Batch Primary School Charfield Primary School Cherry Garden Primary School Downend School East Huntspill Primary School Lyde Green Primary School Mangotsfield School Marlwood School Pawlett Primary School Priory Community School Severn Beach Primary School St Andrew's Church Junior School St Anne's Church Primary School The Castle School The King Alfred School Tortworth Primary School West Huntspill Primary School Worle Community School Pathway Partnership Teams
Policy changes since last version	New policy

1. Introduction

1.1. This Code of Conduct sets out the obligations and professional standards required of all staff and to provide further information for employees. The aim is to ensure that employees at Pathway Trust are aware of illegal, unsafe, unprofessional and unwise behaviour, particularly in relation to safeguarding and that children and young people are safe and well cared for.

1.2. This Code of Conduct promotes a whole trust culture that is safe and inclusive and supports employee guidance about safeguarding situations in order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against them.

1.3. Employees are expected to adopt high standards of professional and personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their work colleagues and the wider Pathway community. The same high standards of professional and personal conduct must apply regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and sexual orientation.

1.4. The trust's values also set out the expectations of employees with which they are expected to comply.

1.5. If employees are unclear on any aspects of the Code of Conduct advice should be sought from their line manager or Headteacher/Director

2. Scope

2.1. The code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers, self-employed workers, members, trustees, community councillors, contractors, trainees, secondees and visitors. For the purpose of the code the term ‘employee’ is used throughout.

3. References

3.1. Child and Children - refers to any pupil or student at the trust up to and including the age of 18.

3.2. LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) - manages child protection allegations against individuals who work with children and young people, whether in a paid or a voluntary position.

4. Duty of care

All employees must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;
- Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests;
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions;

- Ensure their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

5. Policies and Procedures

5.1. All employees must follow trust/school policies and procedures.

5.2. The trust promotes a culture of openness and so employees are expected to report misconduct or concerns (including safeguarding issues) using the appropriate trust procedure if necessary.

5.3. In addition to this Code of Conduct all staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions are expected to adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

5.4. All employees must comply with the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

6. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns

6.1. All employees have a responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, and neglect) and to report safeguarding concerns.

6.2. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity and adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Children must be able to have trust in adults.

6.3. Employees must therefore adopt and promote the trust's commitment to safeguarding and to promote the welfare of children to ensure that the welfare of children is paramount.

6.4. In relation to safeguarding, employees must make themselves familiar with the Pathway Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Behaviour Policy which are available on the trust website. In addition the local school procedure on educational visits is available from the school office or operations manager.

6.5. There may be occasions when staff may wish to report a concern directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or to Ofsted or the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line (0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk)

6.6. All employees must be aware of low level concerns, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and

- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

6.7. All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

6.8. All staff should also be aware of the South West Child Protection Procedures.

6.9. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of dos and don'ts in relation to safeguarding.

7. Respect and Integrity

7.1. Relationships between employees should be characterised by fairness, openness and respect. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging differences, and working together to build a climate of continuous improvement. Where differences occur they should be dealt with calmly and fairly.

7.2. Employees must also be courteous and supportive to the wider Pathway community and should aim to create a welcoming and open relationship with parents. All parental concerns should be treated seriously and dealt with promptly.

7.3. Employees must act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity in performing their duties.

7.4. If an employee has been arrested by the police and/or is subsequently charged by the police, then they must write and inform their Headteacher/Director of the situation. There is also an obligation on employees to inform their Headteacher (Chief Executive for central employee) where they are convicted of a criminal offence or receive a caution once in employment. The Headteacher/Director will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the school/trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

8. Tackling discrimination

8.1. Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood the Pathway equality and diversity policy.

8.2. Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times.

9. Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

9.1. Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

9.2. Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school/trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school/trust community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role

within the school/trust or affect the school/trust reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.

9.3. We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the trust.

9.4. Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

9.5. Employees must not behave in a way outside work that may impact on their suitability to work with children. This includes behaviour which does not directly involve a child/children. Should we become aware of any such incident or behaviour, we may treat the issue as a safeguarding matter and manage it in accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance document. Employees should be aware that any behaviour that we consider may impact on an employee's suitability to work with children will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure and may lead to a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Teaching Regulation Agency (where appropriate).

9.6. We therefore expect employees to make their Headteacher/Director aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the trust.

10. Personal and financial interests

10.1. Employees must notify the Headteacher/Director and declare any financial or non–financial interest which they consider could conflict with the trust's interests.

10.2. Where an employee's duties require them to deal with matters concerning outside organisations, bodies or individuals and where they are personally and/or directly or indirectly involved (e.g. they have a close personal relationship with an individual involved in one of these organisations or bodies) then they must notify the Headteacher/Director of the relationship.

10.3. Orders and contracts must therefore be awarded on merit and no preferential treatment must be shown to businesses run, for example, by friends, partners or relatives in the tender process.

10.4. Information obtained in the course of employment must not be used for personal gain or benefit, and it should not be passed to others who may use information in such a way.

11. Use of Financial Resources

11.1. All employees have a responsibility to look after the resources of the school/trust. These are public funds which must be used in a responsible manner and in accordance with the financial regulations that apply to the school/trust.

12. Political neutrality

12.1. Employees should ensure that they do not use their position for political gain either as an individual or for any political group or allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

13. Inventions, Patents and Intellectual Rights

13.1. Unless prior approval has been sought from the Headteacher/Director employees must not gain financially from the creation of an idea or invention made in the course of their specified normal duties and working hours.

14. Public relations, talking to the media and legal enquiries

14.1. For the trust the Chief Executive will coordinate and manage all media relations including coordinating interviews, producing news releases, statements and lines to take.

14.2. It is advisable for employees to think very carefully before speaking to the media. Employees may wish to seek advice from their Headteacher/Director or their Professional Association/Trades' Union Representative before doing so.

14.3. Employees should inform their Headteacher/Director if they have been contacted by a legal representative in relation to a school or trust matter (e.g. to give evidence) however they must personally decide whether or not to answer questions.

15. Confidentiality and Data Protection

15.1. Employees may have access to confidential information (in order to undertake their day to day responsibilities) about children, their families or trust employees. This must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so or where it is in the interest of the child to do so (for example where abuse is alleged or suspected). Confidential information should never be shared with any person (including friends, partners, etc.) other than on a need to know basis. If employees are unsure as to whether to disclose information then they should seek advice from their Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Headteacher/Director. In relation to safeguarding, if necessary, advice can be sought from the LADO, Ofsted or the NSPCC (please refer to paragraph 6.5).

15.2. We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time. Employees are expected to comply with the trust's systems as set out in our Data Protection Policy. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Officer, in order (where applicable) for relevant breaches to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours.

15.3. Employees must read and understand our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies including in relation to criminal records information, recruitment and safer recruitment, internet, email and communications, and information security.

16. Professional behaviour

16.1. Employees should be punctual and well-prepared, and should carry out tasks to the best of their ability, taking pride in their work.

16.2. Employees are expected to dress appropriately following the guidance from the Headteacher/Director. Employees must not wear clothing that could be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

17. Alcohol and Substance Misuse

17.1. Staff are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out their job and to be able to perform their duties safely without any limitations due to the use or after effects of alcohol or drugs. In this policy drug use includes the use of controlled drugs, psychoactive (or mind-altering) substances formerly known as "legal highs", and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

17.2. Alcohol and drug-related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. Therefore the trust will seek, where appropriate, to treat these problems in a similar way to other health issues. Support may be provided at this point, in order to aid a full recovery, allowing a return to work/effective performance and the full range of duties.

18. Curriculum

18.1. Employees need to take a proactive approach towards both child protection and behaviour policies, through the creation of a positive classroom environment where all children are respected.

18.2. Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified. Advice in this area should be sought from the local school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes as determined by the planning of lessons.

19. Gifts and hospitality

19.1. The trust has a Gifts and Hospitality Policy and employees should read and adhere to this.

20. Health and wellbeing

20.1. Everyone is encouraged to look after their health and wellbeing. This includes maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The trust takes issues of stress very seriously, and looks to provide appropriate support and help in these cases. If employees need support, they are encouraged to discuss issues and concerns with their line manager in the first instance.

20.2. Support can be provided both internally (e.g. through the provision of a mentor), or externally through the Thrive app, the counselling service or through the Occupational Health Service. Professional Associations/Trades' Unions also provide help, support and advice for their members.

21. Acceptable use of technology

21.1. Employees should only use ICT systems and resources (email and phone) for trust business or in accordance with the principles detailed within the trust Acceptable Use of IT Policy. Employees should read and understand this Policy.

22. Social Media

22.1. All staff working in the trust need to be responsible for their own appropriate use of social media. Social media accounts should always be placed on the highest privacy settings, to ensure that students and their parents are not able to access sensitive information or images. Employees must not have any contact with students or parents through personal social media platforms or messaging services. This includes students who have left the school within the last two years. Employees should report to the DSL any attempt by students to contact them on personal accounts.

22.2. Employees must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about our school/trust, our students or their parents or carers; our community council or staff; suppliers and vendors; and other affiliates and stakeholders. You should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the reputation of the school/trust, even indirectly.

22.3. If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our school/trust or our stakeholders, you should print out the content and contact the Headteacher/Director. All employees are responsible for protecting our trust's reputation

23. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

23.1. Employees need to be aware that there may be a disciplinary issue where there is a breach of the Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Disciplinary Procedure.

23.2. With regards to agency workers, we will investigate allegations made against agency workers with the cooperation of the agency. Whilst we may decide to cease using the services of an agency worker, this will not prevent us from investigating allegations and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. We expect agency workers and agencies to cooperate with our investigations and with external agencies where applicable. We will discuss with the agency whether it may be appropriate for them to consider suspending an agency worker, or redeploy an agency worker during an investigation.

24. Review

24.1. This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended annually by the trust. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.