

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

June 2025



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This code of conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all Romero Catholic Academy Trust employees are required to observe.
- 1.2 All our employees are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the Trust. As a member of a Trust community, all employees have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Trust and each individual school within it, whether inside or outside working hours.
- 1.3 All our employees should have regard at all times to the Catholic character of the Academy, and not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the same. Employees are required to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Academy.
- 1.4 The public are also entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from our employees, directors, volunteers and supply staff; to have respect for them and confidence in their integrity.
- 1.5 Employees must not put themselves in a position where work and private interests conflict and must not make use of their employment to further private interests.
- 1.6 All employees are expected to follow the seven principles for public life “the Nolan Principles” of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership
- 1.7 In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers’ Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the Teachers’ Standards issued by the Department for Education and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.
- 1.8 All employees of the Trust are required to read and sign this policy at the start of each academic year. New employees should read and sign this policy on their first day of employment for the Trust. New employees should also be provided or signposted to all other policies referred to in this Code and all other relevant policies, including but not limited to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Equality Statement and Objectives
- Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Financial Regulations Policy

This policy cannot list all acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in the policy all employees are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils within our schools.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This code of conduct applies to all employees within the Trust. All must adhere to this code whilst working in any of the schools within the Trust.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 The term “the Trust” is used within this policy to refer to the Romero Catholic Academy Trust.
- 3.2 The term “school” or “schools” is used within this policy to refer to the academies which form part of the Trust.
- 3.3 The term “employee” is used throughout this policy to cover anyone who is employed by the Romero Catholic Academy Trust at any of its premises; directors, volunteers, supply, self-employed and agency staff.

- 3.4 The term “headteacher” is used throughout this policy to refer to anyone who is employed in the capacity of Headteacher, (i.e. Head of School or Executive Head) with the delegated responsibility as defined within the Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.5 The term “director” is used throughout this policy to refer to anyone who is a member or director of the Trust.
- 3.6 The term “Line Manager” is used throughout this policy to refer to the person who holds the direct responsibility for the management of another member of staff.

4 AIMS

- 4.1 This code sets out the standards of conduct expected of all employees and helps them to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.
- 4.2 The code cannot cover every eventuality and if you are in any doubt, or if you require any additional guidance, you should consult your Line Manager or Headteacher

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The effectiveness and efficiency of this policy rests with employees both individually and collectively as a workforce.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they make themselves aware of the nature of the expectations and restrictions set out in this policy.

6 SAFEGUARDING PUPILS

- 6.1 In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, all employees have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect their welfare.
- 6.2 All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure, and respected.
- 6.3 To effectively safeguard pupils, employees are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Code of Conduct and the Trust’s and individual school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.
- 6.4 In accordance with the individual school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, employees will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, and will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures.
- 6.5 Any employees that have concerns about another employee’s actions or intent that may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm must report this immediately in line with the safeguarding policy so appropriate action can be taken.
- 6.6 If the concern is regarding the Headteacher, this will be reported by the Chair of Governors.
- 6.7 All employees will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates or example, via emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings, as required, at and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively
- 6.8 In accordance with the Trust’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, employees must be aware of the procedure should a pupil disclose a potential safeguarding issue to them. They must also be aware that confidentiality should not be promised to a pupil as any information they received may need reporting through the appropriate process.

7 PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

- 7.1 The Trust understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for employees to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but employees will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.
- 7.2 When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, background, and any educational special needs and disabilities.
- 7.3 Employees will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.
- 7.4 Employees will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account.
- 7.5 Employees will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions.
- 7.6 Employees will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, must be prepared to justify their actions.
- 7.7 Employees will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.
- 7.8 Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.
- 7.9 Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another employee if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent must be given before doing so.
- 7.10 If a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, employees may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. The employee will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation
- 7.11 Employees should only use reasonable force with pupils for restraint purposes in extreme circumstances where a pupil is likely to cause imminent harm to others, themselves or significant damage to school property. All instances of restraint must be formally logged within the school.

8 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS

- 8.1 The Trust expects that employees will:
 - a. Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
 - b. Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
 - c. Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
 - d. Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.
 - e. Only contact pupils through the school's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.
- 8.2 Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, 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 to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

9 PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

- 9.1 Employees are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, volunteers and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- 9.2 The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.
- 9.3 Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.
- 9.4 Employees will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the Trust/School into disrepute.
- 9.5 Employees will inform their Headteacher/Line Manager if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- 9.6 Employees will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits too. All employees attending a trip or visits will act in accordance with this policy.
- 9.7 Employees must always behave responsibly and be professional when engaging with the media both within the school and outside of work to ensure both the enhancement and protection of the reputation of the Trust and its schools.

10 CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

- 10.1 Employees may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust or school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the Trust/School into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- 10.2 Employees will not engage in outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the Trust, or School, or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.
- 10.3 Employees will not engage in use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, the School or the school community into disrepute. Employees should refer to the Trust's Social Networking Policy for further guidance in this area.

11 ATTENDANCE

- 11.1 The Trust expects that all employees will:
 - a. Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
 - b. Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.
 - c. Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
 - d. Refer to the Trust's Special Leave of Absence policies if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.

12 APPEARANCE AND DRESS

- 12.1 The Trust expects that all employees will:
 - a. Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the Trust/School.

- b. Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role.
- c. Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- d. Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- e. Dress in a manner that is free from political or other contentious slogans.

13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 13.1 Employees are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the Trust.
- 13.2 For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions. Employees should refer to the Trust's Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy for further guidance in this area.
- 13.3 The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:
 - a. Payments for services
 - b. Equity interests
 - c. Intellectual property rights
 - d. Hospitality or gifts
- 13.4 Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.
- 13.5 Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:
 - a. Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
 - b. Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
 - c. Where an employee has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague
- 13.6 Membership of a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.
- 13.7 Employees will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.
- 13.8 Failure to make a relevant declaration of interest is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to speak to their Line Manager or Headteacher.

14 HEALTH AND SAFETY

All employees will:

- 14.1 Be familiar with and adhere to the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the relevant environment safe and well.

- 14.2 Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- 14.3 Comply with hygiene requirements.
- 14.4 Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- 14.5 Inform the Headteacher/Line Manager of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

15 SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCES

- 15.1 Employees will not smoke or vape on or within the curtilage of any of the Trust's premises.
- 15.2 Employees will not smoke or vape whilst working with or supervising pupils offsite, such as when on educational visits and trips.
- 15.3 The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- 15.4 If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's performance, the Trust has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the appropriate Trust policy which may include a referral to the police.

16 CYBER SECURITY, USE OF THE INTERNET AND USE OF MOBILE PHONES

- 16.1 Employees must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.
- 16.2 Employees should choose strong passwords and report any security breach, suspicious activity or mistake they make that may cause a cyber security breach.
- 16.3 Employees must not engage in the use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school community or the Trust into disrepute. Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 16.4 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils should only be taken using Trust/school equipment, for purposes authorised by the Trust. Any such use should always be transparent and the resultant files from any such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Trust's procedures on Data Protection (GDPR Policy).
- 16.5 Staff should not use mobile phones for their personal use when carrying out their professional duties or in the view of pupils.

17 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1 Employees involved in the ordering and purchasing of goods and services on behalf of the Trust must be fully conversant with the requirements of the Trust's Financial Regulations to both protect the integrity of individual employees and to ensure compliance with the Academies Handbook at all times.

18 RECRUITMENT

- 18.1 Employees involved in recruitment or decisions relating to promotion or grading must not be involved where they are related to an applicant or have close association with an applicant or employee.
- 18.2 All employees involved in recruitment on behalf of the Trust must be familiar with, and abide by, safer recruitment practices.

19 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 19.1 Employees must treat all information they receive in the course of their employment as
- 19.2 confidential to the Trust and the school. They must not use information in the Trust or school's possession to further their private interests or those of their relations and friends. Deliberate use of confidential information for personal gain may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.
- 19.3 Where employees have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, they must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. If in any doubt about sharing information seek advice from a senior member of staff, or those with designated child protection and data protection responsibilities.
- 19.4 However, employees have an obligation to share with their manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Employees must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by them.

20 BREACH OF CODE

- 20.1 Any breach of this code of conduct, or any of the Trust's Policies in relation to this code of conduct, may result in formal action being taken under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

21 EQUALITY STATEMENT

- 21.1 Those within Romero Catholic Academy Trust who have responsibilities defined within this policy will carry out their duties with regard to the Trust's Equality Statement and commitment to abide by the Equality Act 2010:
- Accepting our legal duty to ban unfair treatment and achieve equal opportunities in the classroom, the workplace and in wider society.
 - We have regard for our duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination,
 - harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equal opportunity;
 - foster good relations
- 21.2 This policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

22 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 22.1 The Trust recognises its duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the DfE statutory guidance document Keeping Children Safe in Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015.
- 22.2 The Trust accepts the responsibility to produce a staff behaviour policy or code of conduct as recommended in the DfE statutory guidance document Keeping Children Safe in Education,

including the acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, and the use of social media.

- 22.3 The Trust recognises its responsibility under the Education Act 2011 and Teacher's Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to support the Secretary of State for Education in the regulation of the teaching profession in England and report conduct which is deemed likely to prohibit persons from teaching.
- 22.4 The Trust recognises its responsibility under the Disclosure and Barring Service
- 22.5 The Trust has published this code of conduct in recognition of its responsibility to comply with the funding agreement and articles of association.
- 22.6 Romero Catholic Academy Trust recognises its "duty of care" to employees and will take steps to maintain confidentiality whenever an allegation against an employee is made.

23 FURTHER GUIDANCE

- Complaints Policy
- Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
- DfE Guidance – Teacher Misconduct: regulating the teaching profession – November 2024
- DfE Guidance – Teachers' Standards; guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies – December 2021
- DfE Guidance – Keeping Children Safe in Education" – Current Version
- Related Policies in addition to the policies listed in paragraph 1.7:
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure
- Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

24 CONTACT FOR ADVICE

Contact for advice on the content of this policy, Headteachers and line managers should contact the Head of Human Resources, Kelly Forrest (kforrest@romerocat.com).