

# **Policy: Staff Code of Professional Conduct**

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**The Code of Professional Conduct** is informed by, and contributes towards, the Trust's Vision and Values.

**Vision:** To provide the best possible life chances for young people. To support learning and to inspire success.

**Values:** Everything we do is in the best interests of students, and we **ASPIRE** to achieve the highest standards.

We value:

#### **Aspirational**

- Set and expect high and achievable standards (both for students, and for staff)
- Be good role models for students
- Be passionate and enthusiastic about teaching, learning and assessment, and personalising professional practice to the needs of the learner
- Reflect, review and feed back.

#### **Supportive**

- Supporting students to stretch their potential, to progress well and achieve
- Be positive and listen and be mutually supportive
- Support learning and inspire success
- Develop an ethos of challenge, support and professional dialogue.

#### **Persistent**

- Set realistic and achievable goals and plan towards success
- Continue on, even if something becomes difficult or challenging
- Keep working towards making improvements, removing any obstacles that get in the way.

#### **Inclusive**

- Develop communications and understanding of each person's role
- Invest in each person, acknowledge and respond to their health, wellbeing and professional development needs
- Work as a team and to the best of our ability, to contribute to the whole Trust.

#### **Respectful**

- A wide understanding of and commitment to our vision for all learners who are studying within Franklin College Trust
- Value each other and show mutual respect for each other's roles
- Provide a safe, respectful working environment for all staff and students
- Empower staff and students to take responsibility for their roles and actions.

#### **Even and Consistent**

- Be consistent in the standards we expect from students, and from staff
- Be fair, honest and transparent to build trust
- Align your actions and behaviours with the Franklin College Trust values

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Staff Code of Professional Conduct is to give clear guidance and support to all staff on the way they should carry out their work on behalf of the Trust, in order to enact the Trust's values and meet the requirements outlined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. This code is in addition to, and separate from, the terms and conditions in the contract of employment for staff.

## 2. Principles

All staff will be treated fairly by the Trust and in a way that demonstrates the Trust's commitment to its values and equality of opportunity. In light of this and in order to provide education of the highest quality all staff must:

- a) Be polite and courteous at all times and show respect for students, colleagues and all others, and not display discrimination, harassment or discourteous behaviour of any kind
- b) Abide by the Trust values and British/Democratic values, as outlined in the Government's *Prevent* agenda
- c) Act professionally, honestly, with the utmost integrity and in ways that protect and promote the best interests of the Trust, avoiding any action that could breach confidentiality, bring the Trust into disrepute or weaken confidence in it.
- d) Work at all times to ensure the safety and security of children and vulnerable young adults, as set out in Trust policy and procedure, and ensure that the by your actions the Trust complies with its obligations as set out in the most up to date version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- e) Understand and discharge their responsibility to ensure the safe, effective and efficient running of the Trust, and abide by all policies and procedures, and reasonable requests, in order to achieve this. Policies and procedures are published on the Trust Staff SharePoint and it is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that they are familiar with them.

## 3. Individual Responsibilities

All staff are expected to display the highest level of professionalism at all times and, in particular, in their relationships with colleagues, students and their individual standards.

### A. Relations with Colleagues

All staff are expected to:

- work harmoniously and positively with their colleagues
- resolve any issues in a professional manner and raise any grievance in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedures
- avoid discussions with staff about the conduct, competence or efficiency of other members of staff except in the pursuance of their professional responsibilities
- avoid disclosure of any confidential information about a member of staff to anyone inside or outside the Trust, except in the pursuance of their professional responsibilities or if the individual member of staff has given express consent to such disclosure

seek assistance from senior staff on any staff related matters that are causing them concern, or which they do not have experience to deal with.

### *B. Relations with Students*

All staff are expected to comply with and abide by the Teachers' Standards, as set out by the NJC for sixth form colleges. In so doing (and in addition where required), staff will:

- show equal favour to all students;
- avoid discussions with students about the conduct, competence or efficiency of other members of staff or students, except in the pursuance of their professional responsibilities;
- avoid the disclosure of any confidential information about a student to anyone outside the Trust unless required to do so to comply with legal or statutory obligations;
- avoid exerting influence on the attitudes, opinions or behaviour of students which are unconnected with the Trust or the students' academic development, and which may conflict with the Trust's statutory duties under *Prevent* and safeguarding;
- avoid entering into improper or very close association with a student. This includes, but is not limited to, the exchange of messages of a personal nature which would be considered not necessary in the pursuance of professional responsibilities, whether in person or by any medium including telephones, text, email or social networking websites.
- avoid entering into any form of sexual relationship with a student whether they are under 18 or an adult. It is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for a person over 18 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. Any improper relationship is a breach of trust. Where a close personal relationship already exists with a student over 18 you have a responsibility to disclose this in confidence to your line manager or a suitable senior member of staff. Such a relationship should be conducted appropriately to avoid negative perceptions from other members of staff or students. Any disclosure might need to be shared, in confidence, and this would be discussed with you.
- avoid spending time alone with students and exercise particular care in one-to-one situations such as during individual tutoring or interviews and residential activities. Examples of such care could be: informing colleagues in advance, leaving doors open and conducting meetings in public areas. Further, staff should not arrange meetings with students off the Trust premises, or when the Trust is not in session, without the prior approval of one of the Safeguarding Team or member of the College Leadership Team (CLT). This includes transporting students in private cars without the expressed permission of a member of the Safeguarding Team or a member of CLT.
- exercise caution and professional judgment over any form of physical contact, including offering comfort, using force to avert an incident, demonstrations in sport, interactions during performing arts activities, administering medication or first aid. Please see the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy for further details
- be aware of what constitutes malpractice in the eyes of either the examination boards or the

Trust and avoid any such action (this is any action which compromises the process of an assessment, the integrity of a qualification, or contravenes accepted professional practice)

- seek assistance from a member of the CLT on any student-related matters that are causing them concern, or with which they do not have experience to deal with the matter.

### *C. Individual Standards*

All staff are expected to:

- enact the Trust's values
- communicate with others in a professional and appropriate manner, both within and outside the Trust and by whatever medium, (i.e. refraining from the use of language, tone or a behaviour that could be interpreted as rude, offensive, abusive or discriminatory)
- avoid social media and other virtual contact with students, parents and other stakeholders, and avoid commenting on or about the Trust, its activities, staff, students and governors on such platforms. The issues outlined within the above bullet points apply equally to contact via the web and/or social media and other apps (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, internet discussion groups and boards, etc.). The exception to this is social media, apps and internet group discussion that have been sanctioned by/approved by the Trust for use by staff. Please note that even when using approved social media, apps and internet groups, the principles and tenets of the Staff Code of professional Conduct still apply. If you use social media and the internet on a personal basis, please ensure that you are safe when on-line, and pay careful attention to the security of personal web pages, social media accounts, etc. Further detail can be found in the Trust's Social Media policy, and within the e-safety sections of the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
- understand and discharge their responsibility to ensure the safe, effective and efficient running of the Trust, and work in accordance with all internal policies and procedures and externally accepted professional practice guidelines<sup>1</sup> and reasonable requests in order to achieve this
- adhere to the Terms and Conditions of their Contract of Employment including those stipulated in the relevant Conditions of Service Handbook. These are available to Staff on SharePoint.
- act in the best interests of the Trust at all times. Staff should not undertake any employment, engagement or activity that might be deemed to interfere with the performance of their duties or conflict with the interests of the corporation or its rights of ownership. Whilst there should be no infringement of personal liberties - if such undertakings conflict - permission should be sought and agreed with their Line Manager and Principal.
- declare to the Principal and CEO if they have any interests (direct or indirect) in contacts with external organisations or individuals (including any contract connected with the Trust, student work placements, etc.), in staff appointments, and in the selection of students for

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<sup>1</sup> Trust and College policies and procedures are published on SharePoint and it is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that they are familiar with them. For teaching staff, the requirements set out in this Code of Professional Conduct are informed by, although not *exclusively confined to*, the most up to date version of Part 2 - Teachers' Standards, published by the Department for Education.

activities, honours, or rewards

- ensure that their off-duty activities and private interests do not conflict with their duty to the Trust including bringing the Trust into disrepute
- dress professionally in a way that is appropriate for their role and enables them to discharge their duties effectively. More formal standards of dress are expected at external liaison events and at internal events where they may meet current or prospective student families
- arrive at Trust premises on time and be ready for work. Teaching staff should start and finish lessons on time, and must be in Trust (or have consent from their line manager to be off-site on Trust business) during Directed Time, including being available 15 minutes before the start of their first lesson each day<sup>2</sup>
- ensure that any absence on a working day (or days) for any reason is notified to the Trust: if any member of staff is absent through illness they must notify the Trust as soon as practically possible and inform a member of the HR Team (telephone 01472 875014 or email HRD@franklin.ac.uk) and if possible their immediate line manager. On return to work a Return to Work interview will be carried out by the immediate line manager or another appropriate manager, in which you are expected to participate. Authority for absence rests with the Principal and CEO (or a senior manager with delegated authority)
- use Trust equipment (both fixed and mobile devices, including telephony) with care and respect and for the purpose(s) for which it was intended/issued, and to adhere to the principle that Trust equipment should under no circumstances be used in a manner than may breach the trust between employer and employee, and/or be contrary to the high standards expected of all staff
- note that as an employee of Franklin College Trust the copyright of documents produced for courses run by the Trust belong to the Trust. Inventions, designs, and development work produced at the Trust remain the property of the Trust. The Trust will decide when to apply for patents or registered designs.
- follow all health and safety rules and regulations and take precautions in accordance with departmental and area codes
- actively contribute to safeguarding at all times to ensure the safety and security of young people and vulnerable adults who are in contact with the Trust, with a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of these individuals and protecting them from any potential harm. Report any low-level concerns in line with the KCSIE guidance and ensure that safeguarding policies and practices are followed, especially with regard to ensuring that statutory obligations (with respect both to the whole Trust and to individual members of staff) are met<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> A weekly allowance of one hour and fifteen minutes will be added to Directed Time and shown in the annual statement of Directed Time

<sup>3</sup> Staff must comply with and actively promote the Trust Safeguarding policy, and be aware of their statutory responsibilities (both individual and for the whole Trust) under the most up to date version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1)*

- actively contribute to the Trust's commitment to protect young people at risk of radicalisation, whether based on faith or secular ideology that may encourage them to promote or engage in harmful and/or illegal activities<sup>4</sup>
- wear their Trust IDs visibly and at all times whilst on Trust premises, or when working for the Trust off-site
- positively encourage all students to wear their Trust IDs visibly when on-site or when representing the Trust off-site (for example at work placements) where appropriate. Enforce Trust policy and procedure with regard to the wearing of Trust IDs by students.
- ensure that any visitor for whom you are responsible is signed in at Reception, collected by you from Reception and accompanied back to Reception at the end of their visit, supervised appropriately throughout their time on site, and also visibly wears a visitor's ID card. It is also the responsibility of all staff to ensure volunteers or contractors meet the requirements to safeguard students if they are responsible for their work at the Trust
- ensure that alcohol is not consumed during normal working hours/days. Staff must not smell of alcohol and / or be impaired in any way during working hours through the consumption of alcohol at other times
- observe the Trust and statutory requirements not to smoke (including e-cigarettes) on Trust premises, except in designated smoking/vaping areas
- ensure that prohibited substances (e.g. drugs) are not brought onto or consumed on Trust premises at any time (and to adhere to the Trust's policies in relation to smoking and drugs)
- maintain confidentiality and not disclose confidential or sensitive information to anyone who does not have a proper or legitimate purpose for receiving it. Work in line with GDPR and report data breaches immediately, seeking guidance from the Data Protection Officer or another member of the College Leadership Team in all instances. Particular care should be taken regarding the release of information about students to people or organisations outside the Trust
- ensure that any communication with the media about the Trust should only be made with the express consent of a member of the College Leadership Team (CLT)
- inform the Trust of any matters that arise during the course of their employment which may have a bearing on their employment or the duties they are able to undertake. Such instances may include receiving penalties on your driving license which would affect your eligibility to drive Trust vehicles and or offences where prosecution is pending or a conviction has been received which may impact future DBS clearance
- treat with caution any offer, gift or hospitality which could suggest a favour is expected in return. Please see the Gifts & Hospitality Policy (with specific emphasis on Bribery Act 2010) for further details.

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<sup>4</sup> Staff must comply with and actively promote Trust policy with regard to anti-radicalisation, and be aware of the statutory responsibilities (both individual and for the whole Trust) for the *Prevent* Duty and as contained in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

**Notes:**

- i. The above examples are not exhaustive or exclusive and conduct of a similar nature or within the spirit of the Code will be deemed part of the Staff Code of Professional Conduct.*
- ii. All staff are bound by Trust and College policies, codes and procedures. These may be found on SharePoint or via the HR Department.*
- iii. In all matters of individual responsibility, staff should inform any member of the College Leadership Team or the HR Department if they require guidance in order to comply with this policy, or if they believe there has been any breach of the Staff Code of Professional Conduct by another member of staff.*
- iv. Any serious safeguarding concerns or allegations made against staff that may meet the harm threshold will be handled in accordance with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, in conjunction with the Trust's Allegations Management Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure.*
- v. Any safeguarding concerns or allegations made against staff considered unprofessional conduct or behaviour that does not meet the harm threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to merit a referral to the LADO but is still considered a low level concern in accordance with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance must still be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or HR Manager. A decision would then be made as to whether it is appropriate to pursue an internal investigation, in line with the Trust's disciplinary procedure.*
- vi. It is the responsibility of the HR Manager to monitor this policy. The Trust will, from time to time, consult with Trade Union representatives on changes to this policy. Whilst it is expected that this policy is followed by all employees, workers and volunteers at the Trust, it does not form part of an employees contract of employment.*

Version No		Purpose/Change	Lead	Impact Assess	Date	Next Review Date
1.0		Introduction of policy	T Wr		December 2014	
2.0		Reviewed and updated	T Wr		July 2015	July 2016
3.0		Reviewed and updated	T Wr		February 2017	February 2018
4.0		Reviewed and updated	E Be		June 2023	June 2026