



Staff Code of Conduct Reviewed:

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1. What is it?

This code of conduct:

- sets out minimum standards of behaviour for employees;
- provides guidelines to help maintain and improve standards;
- aims to protect the reputation of both employees and the tuition centre;
- aims to protect the rights and interests of children and young people involved with the centre

This code of conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with a number of policies and schemes relating to conduct which are set out at the end of this document.

2. Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to all employees of Apex Learning Hub.

3. What is my responsibility?

Employees need to:

- read this policy;
- ensure they understand it;
- ask if there are any points that are unclear;
- use this code of conduct, alongside other policies, to guide them in their role.

Breach of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal. Please refer to the disciplinary procedure for more information.

4. What are the main points?

4.1 Introduction

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of behaviour from employees.

Employees represent the centre and are trusted to act in a way which promotes the centres' interests and protects its reputation.

Employees are accountable for their actions and should ask the director for advice if they are not sure of the appropriate action to take.

4.2 Interests

Conflicts of interest may occur if a decision of the centre could affect an employee, or close friends and relatives, either positively or negatively.

Interests could include:

- involvement with businesses which have existing or proposed contracts with the centre;

Employees should ask themselves the question “Would a member of the public think that they or their family would benefit from the connection between their personal interest and their employment with the centre?”

If the answer is yes then they must declare their interest to the director in writing.

Employees may hold their own personal and political views but must act professionally at work and not allow these views to interfere with their work.

4.3 Outside Commitments

Employees should ensure that their activities outside work do not conflict with their duty to the centre.

All teaching and support staff should inform the director before engaging in any other business or accepting additional employment.

Any additional employment should not conflict with the centre’s interests or have the potential to bring the centre into disrepute.

Employees may not set up a business, or accept a job with a business, which is in direct competition with the centre. Employees should check with the director where further clarification is required.

If an employee works for another organisation they may not act as a messenger between that organisation and the centre. Formal channels of communication must be maintained.

Any secondary employment must not be carried out during an employee’s contracted working hours, nor whilst on standby for official call out purposes unless such employment can be undertaken from their home.

It is an employee’s responsibility to monitor the number of hours they work and to ensure that they are rested and refreshed and able to carry out their role. On average employees should not work more than 48 hours in total each week unless they have opted out of the Working Time Regulations.

4.4 Confidentiality

Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or improper disclosure of information does not occur as a result of their actions. This includes information relating to company business and pupil data.

Employees must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of staff without the express consent of that individual or authorisation from the director.

Confidential information, belonging to the school, should not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.

Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment to cause damage to the centre or for personal gain or benefit. Nor should they pass information on to others who may use it in such a way.

Employees should also be aware that under Section 13 Education Act 2011 that it is a criminal offence to disclose the identity of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation of a criminal offence made by or on behalf of a pupil until a teacher is charged with this offence. This includes disclosing any information that could make that person identifiable. Further details are available from the director.

4.5 Time, facilities and publications

Employees must spend all of their contracted hours working for the centre.

Employees may not make personal use of the centre's property or facilities (stationery, photocopiers, car parks etc.) unless authorised to do so by the director.

Employees may only use the centre telephones to make or receive private calls in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the director.

Any public funds entrusted to an employee must be used in a responsible and lawful manner.

Employees who want to publish any material which they have written in connection with their duties or in which they describe themselves as holding a position within the centre must first gain the consent of the director.

If, in the course of their work, an employee creates a copyright work (for example a procedures manual or a software programme); patentable invention; design capable of registration; this would become the property of the centre and, if appropriate, they would be required to cooperate in the registration formalities.

Employees may retain fees for any lectures delivered with the agreement of the director.

4.6 Equality

The centre is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity and has a positive duty to promote these within the community it serves.

Employees must treat colleagues, pupils, parents, carers, and members of the public and the local community with respect and must not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

Employees involved in making appointments should ensure that decisions are based only on the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. If any applicant is a close personal friend or relative they should not be involved in the appointment process.

Employees should not be involved in any decisions relating to discipline, pay or promotion of close personal friends or relatives.

4.7 Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship

Employees must not accept any fee or reward for work done other than their pay and allowances as set out in their contract of employment except as set out in paragraphs (*a) and (*b) below.

It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts for employees to accept gifts, loans, fees or rewards as an inducement to act in a certain way in their official capacity.

(*a) Employees may accept small items (e.g. inexpensive pens, diaries, flowers, chocolates). They should check the process for this with the director.

(*b) Employees may only accept an offer of a more significant gift (as a guide worth more than £25) or hospitality (e.g. visits, meals, sporting events etc.) if there is a genuine need to do so in order to represent the centre in the community.

Gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to employees or members of their family as a consequence of their employment must be declared to the director in writing whether accepted or not.

Employees should never accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers.

If an external organisation wishes, or is sought, to sponsor a centre activity the rules concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors. The director must be involved in any decision.

Where the centre wishes to sponsor an event or service no employee or member of their family must benefit unless full disclosure of interest has been made to the director. All sponsorship must be recorded.

4.8 Dress and personal protective equipment

Employees should ensure that their dress is appropriate to the professional nature of their role at the centre, the activities they are involved in and any health and safety requirements related to these.

Suitable personal protective equipment will be issued and must be worn where a risk assessment indicates it is appropriate.

4.9 Speaking to the media

It is advisable for any approaches regarding centre related issues, from all press, radio or TV stations or specialist press to be directed to the director.

4.10 Misconduct

All employees should conduct themselves in a professional manner at work. Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring them or the centre into disrepute may be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

It is essential that employees inform the director of any police investigation, charge, caution, reprimand, fine or conviction immediately. All such disclosures will be handled in confidence but this may result in a suspension from duties while an investigation takes place.

5. Are there any exemptions?

No – however some parts of the code of conduct will have more of an effect on senior, managerial and professional staff than others.

Many employees are responsible under their own professional codes of conduct. In cases where professional codes of conduct appear to conflict with the school's own code advice should be obtained from the headteacher.

6. Director responsibilities:

- provide additional advice and guidance on any points within the code of conduct.
- signpost employees to relevant policies, documents and guidelines.

7. Frequently asked questions

- **What should an employee do if they know that someone is breaching this code of conduct?**

Often it is those closest to an organisation who realise that there is something wrong. Sometimes people are reluctant to act upon their concerns because they think that they are being disloyal, or because they are afraid that they might be victimised if they speak up.

The centre has in place a whistleblowing policy to enable employees to raise concerns in an appropriate manner and to ensure that they do not suffer any detriment as a result of doing so.

- **Can an employee's partner's business tender for a contract?**

The code of conduct does not preclude anyone from having the opportunity to tender for business. However, the process must be, and be seen to be, fair open and transparent. To this end employees would need to make the director aware of their interest, take no part in the tendering process and ensure that they do not pass on any information which would give that business any advantage in the process.

- **Can an employee's relative apply for a job in the centre?**

Yes. They can apply and would be considered on the basis of their suitability for the role. They should declare their relationship on the appropriate section of the application form.

If the employee is involved in recruiting for the role they should not be involved in any stage of the appointment and should disclose the relationship as soon as they are aware that their relative or close personal friend is applying for the role so that someone else can be assigned to the appointments process.

- **Can an employee take an evening job?**

Teachers and support staff should inform their director prior to taking on any additional work.

In all circumstance's employees must remember:

- They should not do work which is in direct competition with the centre;
- The work they are doing should not bring the centre into disrepute;
- They may not act as a "go-between" between the centre and the other business;
- They must not undertake other work when they are on duty for the centre, including during standby or call out duties unless the work can be undertaken from home;
- That they are responsible for ensuring they get enough rest and do not exceed working time regulations.

What if a pupil buys an employee a box of chocolates – should they accept them?

Generally, gifts which are of low value (under £25) can be accepted. Employees should be guided by centre procedures and by common sense.

- **Can employees accept discounts because they work for the centre?**

Any other discount offered should be treated in the same way as gifts and hospitality and generally should not be accepted.

- **Can employees' campaign for a political party outside of work?**

Employees may campaign on behalf of a political party however when engaged on centre business they must remain politically neutral and not allow their personal or political views to interfere with their duties.

- **What types of interests should be declared?**

An interest is anything, which could cause a reasonable member of the public, knowing all facts, to think that an employee might be influenced when making a decision in the course of their work.

Interests could include:

- Land or property ownership
- Relationships with people involved
- Involvement with an organisation or pressure group which may oppose a centre policy

Can an employee use the centre photocopier to make personal copies?

Employees should get authorisation from the director before using any work facilities for personal use.

- **What should an employee do if the code of conduct doesn't cover their specific situation?**

In the first instance seek advice from the director.