



Staff Code of Conduct

Date Adopted: October 2020

Author/owner: Board of Trustees

Review: October 2021

NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association

History of most recent policy changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
V1.0	October 2020		New Code of Conduct for all staff in the Tarka Learning Partnership. Replaces individual schools' Staff Code of Conduct	KCSIE requires organisations to have a Staff Code of Conduct

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1.0 Objective, scope and principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all employees are expected to observe. Employees working in the Tarka Learning Partnership (TLP) are role models and in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils within schools. Every employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of their school and the Tarka Learning Partnership, whether inside or outside working hours.

In adopting this policy, the Tarka Learning Partnership is committed to working towards creating a working environment in which all employees are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and where unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees. This Code of Conduct does not form part of the contract of employment.

Casual and self-employed workers, agency staff and volunteers working in a school are also expected to observe the standards of behaviour set out in this document.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under “Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales” have a statutory obligation to adhere to the most recent “Teachers’ Standards” and in relation to this policy, part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct.

2.0 Compliance

Employees must familiarise themselves and comply with all school and Tarka Learning Partnership policies and procedures.

Employees must complete the form in Appendix 3 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct. This form should be signed and dated and returned to the school to be held on the employee’s personnel file.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in a disciplinary investigation and action including but not limited to dismissal in accordance with the Tarka Learning Partnership’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

3.0 Setting an example

This Code helps all employees to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Employees must not discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Further details are available in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Employees must set good examples of behaviour and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Standards expected of employees can be found in Appendix 1.

Employees must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language and must avoid behaving in a way that humiliates pupils, discriminates against or favours pupils. Staff should consider their conduct so that misinterpretations by pupils are minimised. Employees should consider if they have any unconscious bias and

should seek to avoid this being evident in their practice and behaviour.

Staff must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

4.0 Safeguarding pupils

Employees have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil, or colleague to the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Child Protection.

Employees must make themselves aware of the name of their school's DSO. This information is available on notice boards in the staffroom and around each school.

Employees must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Employees must never promise that they will not act on information that they are told by a pupil.

Employees are provided with access to the following documents and must become familiar with these:

- Tarka Learning Partnership's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Tarka Learning Partnership's Whistleblowing procedure
- The DfE Statutory Guidance Document "Keeping Children Safe in Education"
- The "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings"

All employees are required to undertake annual Child Protection training and complete any revised updates that may arise during the year.

5.0 Relationships with pupils

It is paramount for employees to treat students with dignity, to build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times to observe proper boundaries appropriate for their professional position. Employees must have regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions and fundamental British values (such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs). In addition, employees should ensure that their personal beliefs are not expressed in ways to exploit students' vulnerability.

Employees must not behave in a way that may be perceived as sarcastic, nor should they make jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrass or humiliate pupils, discriminate against or favour pupils.

Employees should make every effort to ensure their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage inappropriate boundaries and be aware that infatuations may carry the risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Physical relationships with pupils are strictly forbidden and may lead to a criminal conviction. This may also

apply to former pupils and advice must be sought before commencing any such relationship.

Employees must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring or family connections. Employees should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections. A declaration form is available at Appendix 2 of this document for declaration of such relationships.

Private tuition of students within the same school that the employee is based might cause a conflict of interest. Employees are discouraged from tutoring pupils from within the school they teach and must not tutor pupils they teach directly. It must also be made clear that any tutoring is a strictly private and external arrangement and unconnected to the school or the Tarka Learning Partnership.

6.0 Professional relationships with colleagues

Employees must help create a positive working environment and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. Examples of acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour can be found in Appendix 1.

Employees must strive toward and promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that employees will attempt to resolve matters informally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case, they should refer the matter to their line manager. For further detail employees should refer in the first instance to the Dignity at Work Policy and the Grievance Policy to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Where a close personal relationship already exists or develops with another member of staff with the potential to create a conflict of interest, both parties should immediately declare this relationship to their line manager(s) who will, together with them, appraise the risks and identify possible options to avoid any conflict of interest.

7.0 Honesty and integrity

Employees must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes handling and claiming money and the use of school and Tarka Learning Partnership property and facilities.

Employees must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer your concerns to the attention to your Head Teacher or where the concern relates to the Head Teacher to the Chair of the Local Governing Body and Chief Executive Officer of the Tarka Learning Partnership.

Employees must not accept gifts or hospitality from suppliers or associates of the school or Tarka Learning Partnership, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from parents. Personal gifts from employees to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

Employees must make known to the Head Teacher and Chair of the Governors all financial and non-financial interests that could bring them into conflict with the school's or Tarka Learning Partnership's interests.

All personal relationships with contractors, or potential contractors should be made known by the employee to the Head Teacher and Chair of the Governors with responsibility for the contract.

Employees must not be involved in any recruitment process if they have a personal relationship with the applicant inside or outside of work.

Without fear of recrimination, employees can report any impropriety or breach of procedures using the process laid out within the Tarka Learning Partnership's Whistleblowing Policy.

8.0 Conduct outside of work

The Tarka Learning Partnership recognises an employee's right to a private life. Employees should be mindful however of engaging in conduct that might bring into question their ability to effectively carry out their role. Where there is a question over the appropriateness of behaviour of an employee outside of work and its relevancy of the conduct to the workplace and/or the risk to the school or TLP's reputation an investigation will be carried out under either of the following policies:

- Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff Policy and Procedure; and/or
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A disciplinary investigation will also be carried out where behaviour outside of the work could be considered a transferable risk to the school and could lead to potential harm of a child.

Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. This includes criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs (subject to the employer's duty of care to employees who may have substance or dependency issues) or sexual misconduct.

Employees must inform the Head Teacher of any potential issue/incident that has occurred outside of work which could give cause for concern in the workplace.

9.0 Employment outside of the Tarka Learning Partnership

Employees may undertake work outside of the Tarka Learning Partnership, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Tarka Learning Partnership not be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the Tarka Learning Partnership. Employees must declare and discuss secondary employment with their Head Teacher.

10.0 E-Safety and internet use

Employees must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the Tarka Learning Partnership's policies and guidance on both ICT use and Social Media.

The Tarka Learning Partnership recognises an employee's right to a private life. Employees should be mindful however of engaging in social media use that might bring into question their ability to effectively carry out their role. Where there is a question over the appropriateness of social media content and its relevancy of the individual's conduct to the workplace, and/or the risk to the Tarka Learning Partnership's reputation, an investigation will be carried out under the Disciplinary policy.

Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Tarka Learning Partnership, its community or school into disrepute. Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Employees must not respond to negative comments posted online relating to the Tarka Learning Partnership, the school or its stakeholders but bring this to the attention of the Head Teacher.

Employees must exercise caution in their use of all social media and any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by “liking” certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites, where employees could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Employees must not link themselves with the school or Tarka Learning Partnership on any social network site they use unless with the prior consent of the Head Teacher.

Employees must not use equipment belonging to the TLP to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing pornographic images or links to them be brought into the workplace. Doing so will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the employee to continue to work in schools.

Employees must only contact pupils via school/Tarka Learning Partnership authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils (unless under the provisions of section 5).

Employees must report to the Head Teacher any contact by a pupil by an inappropriate route.

Photographs/still images or video footage of pupils should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur in accordance with the Tarka Learning Partnership’s Privacy Notice or where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the TLP’s procedures on school equipment.

11.0 Confidentiality

Employees must not reveal confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

Employees are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential to the school. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by another employee), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate TLP procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the pupil’s parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

12.0 Dress and appearance

Employees must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.

Employees must not dress in a manner that could be regarded by others as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

Employees must not wear clothes with political or other contentious slogans.

If your post requires you to wear protective clothing or use equipment, then you must adhere to the instructions provided by your manager.

13.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed no later than every two years.

Appendix 1 – Acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and employee standards

Examples of Acceptable Behaviour and Standards Expected of all employees

People behave acceptably when they:

- Maintain and role model standards of behaviour in keeping with the interests and standing of the school and Tarka Learning Partnership. This includes behaviour outside of working hours and in any form that is visible to the public, including social networking or any other electronic medium.
- Follow all appropriate safeguarding procedures.
- Devote full attention while at work to the duties of their position and in doing so act with responsibility, good judgement and in good faith.
- Carry out any reasonable instructions given by those with authority to do so.
- Afford dignity, trust and respect for everyone and themselves.
- Have awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others and only make reasonable and manageable demands.
- Communicate honestly and openly.
- Provide and are receptive to honest feedback based on evidence.
- Carry out their role consistently with any standards set by their appropriate professional body.
- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in an appropriate way.
- Take steps to address any unacceptable behaviour.
- Observe the rules, regulations and instructions adopted by the Tarka Learning Partnership.

In addition to the above, the expectations of those employed in management/senior leadership roles are to:

- ensure the standards expected from employees are role-modelled, monitored and managed effectively
- effectively manage all applicable statutory and non-statutory obligations
- appropriately manage all alleged incidents and/or allegations.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

People behave unacceptably when they:

- Use aggressive, threatening, demeaning or ridiculing language, repeatedly shouting or ignoring people.
- Bring up someone's private life inappropriately.
- Make unreasonable demands on a colleague.
- Criticise people or maliciously gossip about them in their absence.

- Make comments or jokes, about distinctive peoples and nationalities
- Make frequent comments about aspects of physical appearance.
- Threaten or imply, without reason, that as a colleague, you will cause the person to lose their job or fail to get a promotion or suffer another form of career difficulty or financial disadvantage.
- Coerce someone to join the harassment/bullying of another person.
- Exclude or marginalise someone or refuse to engage with them appropriately.
- Breach confidentiality.

This list is not exhaustive. It is simply a guide to help individuals consider their own and other behaviours and gain understanding of what behaviours are unacceptable in the workplace.

Appendix 2 – Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Employees must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils.

EMPLOYEE NAME	
SCHOOL	

PUPIL NAME	RELATIONSHIP

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the Code of Conduct relating to contact outside of school with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of school I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable – this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
- No monies come through the school at any point, informally (e.g. via the child) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the school premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new declaration form to ensure the school is aware of any relationships.

SIGNED	
DATE	

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Head Teacher

Appendix 3 – Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Tarka Learning Partnership’s Staff Code of Conduct.

EMPLOYEE NAME	
SCHOOL	
POSITION/POST HELD	
SIGNED	
DATE	

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Head Teacher