



## Policy: Code of Conduct

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Corinium Education Trust expects all of its children and young people to receive the highest possible quality of teaching, learning and assessment within positive and respectful school environments. Equally high standards are expected of all of our pupils. It is important that all members of staff within The Corinium Education Trust also have the same high standards and act as good role models.
- 1.2. All employees of The Corinium Education Trust should understand that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, sets an example. Therefore, if all staff employed within The Corinium Education Trust's schools follow the code of conduct they should not then find themselves in a situation where their conduct could create an impression of conflict of interest or corruption in the minds of the public.
- 1.3. The Trustees of The Corinium Education Trust recognise that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, to remove all doubt, it is important to clarify the expected standards.
- 1.4. This document forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.
- 1.5. This document applies to all staff members who are:
  - Employed by The Corinium Education Trust, including the Trust Lead (CEO) and Headteachers.
  - Employed in units or bases on school sites within The Corinium Education Trust.
- 1.6. This document does not apply to:
  - Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
  - Employees of external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **2. Standards**

- 2.1. All employees of The Corinium Education Trust are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and to provide, when required, advice to members of Local Governing Bodies, Trustees and fellow employees with impartiality.
- 2.2. All employees must report any suspected unlawfulness, mal-administration, impropriety or breach of procedure to the Headteacher of their individual school, Trust Lead (CEO) or Chair of the Board of Trustees.

### **3. Personal appearance**

- 3.1. The Trustees of The Corinium Education Trust expect all staff members to:
- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school;
  - Observe a standard of personal hygiene and appearance which is appropriate to the nature of the job;
  - Remember that they are role models for pupils and that their dress and appearance should reflect this;
  - Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- 3.2. All members of staff should dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role within The Corinium Education Trust and that compliments the standards expected of our pupils. Male staff should usually wear a tie. Female staff should wear tops which are smart. Skirts and dresses must be of a length that does not allow views of upper thigh when bending over. Low or revealing tops or dresses are not acceptable in school. Jeans or clothes made of other denim type material are not appropriate in school. When staff teach PE they must wear sports clothing. In some schools, hoodies and fleeces are available for staff to wear. On INSET days when the pupils are not in school, staff are permitted to dress more casually.
- 3.3. The rules governing pupil dress often relate to Health and Safety in the workplace. Staff should also be aware of this with regard to their own choice of clothing, footwear, piercings and jewellery.

### **4. Attendance**

- 4.1. The Trustees of The Corinium Education Trust expect all staff members to:
- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays;
  - Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible;
  - Refer to The Corinium Education Trust's policy on staff absence if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness;
  - Follow The Corinium Education Trust's absence reporting procedures within their individual schools when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

### **5. Professional behaviour and conduct**

- 5.1. All members of staff within The Corinium Education Trust are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect and model school standards at all times.
- 5.2. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated at any school within The Corinium Education Trust.
- 5.3. All members of staff are expected to model high standards of behaviour towards pupils and to other staff within The Corinium Education Trust. Any reference to a person's sex, race, disability, size, religion or belief, sexual orientation, appearance or comments about gender reassignment will be treated with disciplinary action.
- 5.4. Rudeness and harmful words are not accepted. Swearing is never acceptable in the presence of children.
- 5.5. Members of staff should always talk positively about school. If a member of staff is unhappy they should speak to a senior leader who can then help rather than speaking negatively to colleagues.

- 5.6. Staff employed by The Corinium Education Trust must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring individual schools or the Trust into disrepute.
- 5.7. Staff employed by The Corinium Education Trust must inform the Headteacher, or a senior member of staff in the school in which they are deployed, if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- 5.8. Allegations against staff can fall into two categories: 1) those that meet the harms threshold and 2) concerns referred to as low-level concerns. The Corinium Education Trust's 'Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against teachers, other staff and volunteers' has more detail on how low-level concerns and allegations will be managed.
- 5.9. Allegations that meet the harms threshold might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school. Harms threshold is met if an individual has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children and/or; behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 5.10. Low-level concerns do not mean that the concern is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in, or on behalf of the school, may have acted in a way that:
- Is inconsistent with the CET 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).
- 5.11. Examples of behaviours that would be considered 'low-level' include, but are not limited to:
- Being over friendly with children;
  - Having favourite children;
  - Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phone, without permission from a senior member of staff. Any photos taken must be deleted from personal mobile phones once downloaded onto a school computer. Photos should only be for school use, such as displays and reports for the school website;
  - Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door (unless the member of staff is employed for intimate care of an individual pupil and this is in the care plan and approved by the headteacher);
  - Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, humiliating or offensive language.
- 5.12. In addition to behaviours outlined elsewhere in this Code of Conduct and the types of abuse and neglect set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE) the following is a non-exhaustive list of some further behaviours which would also be a cause for concern:
- An Adult who
- Allows a pupil/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening;
  - Gossips/shares information inappropriately;
  - Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language;
  - Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role;
  - Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries;
  - Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine;
  - Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a pupil or pupils;
  - Appears to have special or different relationships with a pupil or pupils; seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a pupil.

## **6. Safeguarding and Child Protection**

- 6.1. The Trustees of The Corinium Education Trust expect all staff members to:
- Act in an open and transparent way that does not lead to any suspicion about their actions or intent;
  - Respect their duty to protect children and young people from harm and to maintain professional boundaries;
  - Read and understand school policies on child protection and safeguarding, including their obligations to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- 6.2. In order to keep young children, young people and ourselves safe, members of staff should never enter a toilet with a child with the door closed. If there is the need to change a child who has had an accident, then the member of staff must tell another member of staff and make sure that the door is ajar. If a child needs a full change then parents must be informed.
- 6.3. All members of staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the individual school's procedures and follow all the guidance. For example, hot drinks should not be carried around children – a safety mug with a tight fitting lid must be used. Teachers can have a hot drink before and after school, at break time and at lunch time.

## **7. Declaration of interests**

- 7.1. Members of staff within The Corinium Education Trust are required to declare their interests where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of their schools or The Corinium Education Trust. Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.
- 7.2. Members of staff within The Corinium Education Trust should also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school or Trust activities.
- 7.3. Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the The Corinium Education Trust's Director of Finance and Operations or trade union.
- 7.4. All declarations, including nil returns, should be submitted in writing to The Corinium Education Trust's Director of Finance and Operations for the Register of Business Interests.

## **8. Probity of records**

- 8.1. The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where a member of staff falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.
- 8.2. Where a member of staff has claimed any benefit, either directly or indirectly, or has failed to disclose their full earnings, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the police.

## **9. Financial inducements**

- 9.1. Personal gifts must not be given to pupils or their families/carers. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with The Corinium Education Trust's schools' behaviour or rewards policies, recorded, and not based on favouritism.
- 9.2. All members of staff must familiarise themselves and comply with The Corinium Education Trust's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and declare to the Board of Trustees, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
- Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo. These items may be accepted;
  - Gifts offered by parents or pupils to school staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse gifts of money;
  - Hospitality in the shape of meals and drinks where it forms part of a normal business meeting;
  - Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with The Corinium Education Trust's business, which shall be at the Trust's expense.
- 9.3. Members of staff should not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact. Any such gifts should be returned. They should declare any gift that cannot be returned, to the Board of trustees, who will decide how it will be used.
- 9.4. Members of staff should only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the Board of Trustees.

## **10. Contacts**

- 10.1. Members of staff should not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

## **11. Health and safety**

- 11.1. Adults taking medication that may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice regarding their suitability to do so and should not work with pupils whilst taking medication unless medical advice confirms that they are able to do so. Adult medication on the premises must be securely stored out of the reach of children.
- 11.2. All members of staff within The Corinium Education Trust must:
- Be familiar with and adhere to The Corinium Education Trust's Health and Safety Policy and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well;
  - Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them;
  - Comply with hygiene requirements;
  - Comply with accident reporting requirements.
  - Inform the Headteacher of the school in which they are deployed of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with Working Time Regulations.

## **12. Alcohol and illegal drugs**

- 12.1. The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Members of staff must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- 12.2. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a member of staff's performance or safety of themselves or others, The Corinium Education Trust has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, including referral to the police.

## **13. Premises, equipment and communication**

- 13.1. School equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities within The Corinium Education Trust and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher of the individual school or Trust Lead (CEO).
- 13.2. Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.
- 13.3. Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something he/she proposes to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Headteacher of the individual school or Trust Lead (CEO).
- 13.4. The Corinium Education Trust reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems as outlined in the ICT Acceptable use agreement.
- 13.5. Personal property of a sexually explicit nature or property which might be regarded as promoting radicalisation or otherwise inappropriate material such as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media including links to such material must not be brought onto or stored on School premises or on any School equipment within The Corinium Education Trust.
- 13.6. Communication systems may be accessed by The Corinium Education Trust when an individual school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity.
- 13.7. Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the Headteacher of an individual school or Trust Lead (CE)). Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 13.8. School equipment that is used outside school premises, for example laptops, should be returned to the individual school within The Corinium Education Trust when the employee leaves employment, or if requested to do so by the school's Headteacher.
- 13.9. Staff must not store personal data (including photographs) relating to pupils or staff on personal computers or devices.

#### **14. Social Media and networking sites**

- 14.1. Employees of The Corinium Education Trust must not access social media and networking sites for personal use during classes.
- 14.2. Access to some journals, blogs and social networking sites is permitted during classes if directly related to the teaching and learning of that class at that time.
- 14.3. Employees of The Corinium Education Trust must act in the best interests of the school in which they work and should not disclose personal data or information about any individual, including staff members, children and young people.
- 14.4. Members of staff should not 'friend' pupils or members of a pupil's family on social networking websites. It is acknowledged that staff may have pre-existing friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, prior to the pupil joining a school within The Corinium Education Trust but staff members need to be responsible in what they communicate. See 13.6
- 14.5. Members of staff should ensure that their privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.
- 14.6. Members of staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by staff at the individual school and across The Corinium Education Trust, pupils, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by the school and must not post material which damages the reputation of the individual school and The Corinium Education Trust or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.
- 14.7. Access may be withdrawn and disciplinary action taken if there is a breach of confidentiality or defamatory remarks are made against any person within or the management of The Corinium Education Trust.

#### **15. Data Protection and confidentiality**

- 15.1. Members of staff in schools within The Corinium Education Trust are in a privileged position of knowing a great deal of personal information about children and families. It is important that all efforts are made to ensure that others do not have access to it. Therefore, it is imperative that members of staff do not:
  - Discuss any confidential matters where a child/parent (even parent helper) might hear, especially in the staffroom, reception areas and corridors when non-staff present;
  - Discuss private information with staff that they should not/do not need to know;
  - Discuss parents or pupils confidential information if meeting socially;
  - Share school information on social media or discuss school based incidents with family or friends.
- 15.2. Necessary conversations about pupils/families should take place before school, after school, in the staffroom or office. As part of our e-safety policy, we do not allow staff to use mobile phones in the presence of children. The staffroom or office is an acceptable place to use your phone when not in class. Members of staff will be given a school mobile phone to use on a trip or residential stay in an emergency or for contacting parents when needed.
- 15.3. Members of staff are required, under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, to collect, store/maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.



- 15.4. Members of staff should not disclose sensitive information about the individual school, The Corinium Education Trust, its employees, or the LA, to other parties.
- 15.5. The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a member of staff to disclose information which would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.
- 15.6. Members of staff have the right to request access to data that is held about them and such requests should be made to the Trust's Data Controller (currently the Finance Director).
- 15.7. The Corinium Education Trust asserts its right to ownership and use of all Intellectual Property generated by staff during the course of their employment or generated by staff outside the course of their employment where School resources have been used.

## **16. Breaches of this code of conduct**

- 16.1. Any breach of this code of conduct must be reported to the headteacher of the individual school immediately or the Trust Lead (CEO) if the concern is about the headteacher.
- 16.2. Where a breach of this code of conduct has been reported, a formal investigation will be carried out by the headteacher, Trust Lead (CEO) or Board of Trustees.

## **17. Related policies**

- 17.1. This Code of Conduct should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the Professional Standards for Teachers and The Corinium Education Trust's related policies:
  - Safeguarding Policy (CET and individual school policy)
  - Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against teachers, other staff and volunteers
  - Staff Disciplinary Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Accessibility Policy and Plan
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
  - ICT Acceptable Use Policy

## Document History

**Creation Date:** May 2018

**Trust Lead:** Chiquita Henson, CEO

**Approved by:** Board of Trustees

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Review date	Significant amendments	Made by	Next review
October 2021	Re-formatted to show document history 5.8-5.12 Updated to reflect changes in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' 17.1 Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against teachers add to Related Policies	CXH	October 2022
September 2022	Updated to reflect changes in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022'. Added in 'humiliating' language as an example of a low-level concern (5.11) and information on dealing with low-level concerns is in the statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers. CET Disciplinary Policy added to Related Policies list.	CXH and HLC (DSL at CDPS)	September 2023
September 2023	Checked against 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.' No significant revisions necessary. 'Chief Executive' changed to 'Trust Lead (CEO)'. ICT Acceptable Use Policy added to list of Related Policies.	CXH	September 2024