



Plymouth CAST

Staff Code of Conduct

Last Update: September 2020 (version 3.0)

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	October 2018	Raymond Friel CEO	All Plymouth CAST Employees	Required by KCSIE
2.0	July 2019	Raymond Friel CEO	All Plymouth CAST Employees	Required by KCSIE
3.0	September 2020	Adelle Pope HR Manager	All Plymouth CAST Employees	Required by KCSIE

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	SEL	CEO	Date Approval	Version	Date for Review
✓	✓	✓	October 2018	1.0	September 2019
✓	✓	✓	26 th July 2019	2.0	July 2020
✓	✓	✓	July 2020	3.0	September 2022

National/Local Policy

This policy must be localised by Academies

This policy must not be changed, it is a CAST/National Policy (only change logo, contact details and yellow highlighted sections)

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? Yes No If yes, the policy status is: Consulted and Approved Consulted and Not Approved Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteachers, CAST Directors, JCC	Monday 5 November 2018	1.0
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteachers, CAST Directors, JCC	Monday 2 September 2019	2.0
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1. Vision and Values

Plymouth CAST is a multi-academy trust of Catholic schools which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All staff in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to the vision and principles of the Trust.

2. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow, based on our vision and values and the Teachers' Standards.

School staff have an influential position in the Trust and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

CAST Central staff likewise will be expected to demonstrate the same high standards, whether visiting schools, at CAST Central, or on CAST business.

We expect all CAST employees and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in further action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, the school and its pupils.

3. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2019), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Support and promote the vision, values and use of Principles of the Trust, maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.

http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/plymouth_cast_vision_and_values/276905

- Treat pupils and adults with dignity and respect, demonstrating sensitivity and civility at all times Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory framework they must act within and adhere to the Teachers Standards.

5. Safeguarding

At Plymouth CAST, our aspiration is to ensure that in all our academies and settings, safeguarding is at least effective and moving towards best practice. This is fundamental to our vision of the dignity of the human person, especially the vulnerable.

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with the *Plymouth CAST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* (latest version) and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the CAST website and from each academy. New staff will also be given copies on arrival as part of their induction.

All staff are required to read, understand and abide by the principles and practices outlined in the following key safeguarding documents which will be emailed to them at the beginning of term. All staff must sign a Safeguarding Declaration by the second week of the academic year to confirm they have done so.

http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/safeguarding_resources/322065

6. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid **contact with pupils outside of school hours** if possible, recognising pre-existing family relationships may exist. Pupils should not be invited to the homes of staff, unless in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a member of staff with children in the school has their friends for a sleepover) which have been assessed and approved by the Headteacher or CAST Senior Executive Leadership. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

Physical contact between staff and pupils should, as a general rule, be avoided at all times. There will be occasions, however, when appropriate physical contact is required to protect a pupil from harming themselves or others. There will also be times when it is appropriate to comfort a child, especially younger children, with some physical contact. We will be guided by the DFE's publication, *Use of Reasonable Force* (2013) and the advice in the CAST *Safeguarding and Child Protection* policy.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable, unless the gift is a joint gift to a class, for example from a Parents' Association, with the approval of the Headteacher after consultation with CAST executive.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the headteacher.

Guidance on close personal relationships within same school (defined as married couples, co-habiting partners, close personal friends, parent/child, sibling or other familial relationships).

- It is inappropriate for staff to sit on an appointment, pay or appraisal panel for someone with whom they have a close personal relationship, or to make a decision about a curriculum, or pastoral matter for a student with whom they have a close personal relationship. Staff are required to declare such interests and remove themselves from processes to avoid any allegations of bias or inequality.
- Staff-parents should not 'parent' during the working day (through interactions with their child, or in communication with colleagues who teach or tutor their child)
- Staff-parents should keep work and home separate. It is best practice for students not to sit in parent's offices before school, at break or during lunch time, however local decisions may be made by headteachers dependent upon the staff-parent's role. Staff-parents should not support their own children whilst they are at work for matters that have arisen with friends at school, or with teachers in the classroom.
- Teachers should not contact staff-parents at work and have a discussion about their child during the staff-parent's working hours, but to arrange a meeting outside of these hours, unless an urgent matter has arisen, in which case, permission may be given by the headteacher for cover to be sought to release the teacher or support staff to attend an urgent parental meeting.
- The guiding principle for close personal relationships is fairness and equality and that no-one should be seen to be treated more or less favourably due to their relation with anyone else in the school or CAST office. This principle should guide all aspects of operational practice and decision-making.
- Definitions of 'close personal relationship', when in dispute, will be decided upon by the Headteacher, unless it is their relationship with a colleague which is in question in which case it is referred to the ESM, or appropriate line manager.

7. Communication and social media

Social Media

We define social media as websites and applications that allow users to create and share content and/or take part in online networking. Social media is unique because it supports collaboration and the sharing of ideas and opinions across a global scale and the content is usually managed by the users rather than the provider of the applications.

The most popular social media sites include the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Tumblr
- Reddit.

Social media activities can include, but are not limited to:

- maintaining a profile page on social/business networking site such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn
- writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person
- taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards
- leaving product or service reviews on business websites or customer review websites
- taking part in online polls.

This policy therefore covers personal blogs, any posts you might make on other people's blogs and to all online forums and noticeboards.

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should consider not using their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead. All social media accounts should be set as private.

Plymouth CAST believes that when taking part in social media you should be honest, straightforward and respectful. The lines between public and private can become blurred so assume that everything you write is permanent and can be viewed by anyone at any time. Always assume that everything can be traced back to you personally, despite any measures that you may have put in to protect yourself, as well as to your colleagues, the school and its pupil, parents, partner agencies, suppliers and to Plymouth CAST itself.

Staff should not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites, either inside or outside of working hours, which may bring themselves, the school or employer into disrepute. Staff should not have contact with any pupil through social media (unless the pupils are family members) and should exercise caution when posting photographs and/or comments so that professional standards are maintained and staff do not compromise themselves or the school.

Employee must not use any Plymouth CAST or School IT resources to access social media unless they need to do so as part of your job. Employees should seek specific guidance and instruction from their line manager in relation to the access and use of social media as part of their work role, where required. Proposals to use any social media applications as part of their role within Plymouth CAST or any of its schools must be approved by a senior manager in their work setting. This can include the teaching of a social media lesson to pupils to demonstrate the dangers of using social media.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent. Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy.

Communication

Communication from parents and carers to the school should be acknowledged within twenty-four hours in term time, within the timeframe of reasonable working hours, with a reply to the issue within five working days in term time, using designated school email accounts.

Email

Use of email in school. Staff should assume that any email is being read by the subject of the email and refer to them at all times with courtesy as demanded by our foundational vision. Individuals have the right under data protection and freedom of information legislation to have access to any correspondence which refers to them. No-one should be referred to in a derogatory or demeaning way in any school communication. Staff should avoid any references to parents and carers and pupils in their own social media communications.

School and CAST email accounts should not be used for feedback or group raising of issues of concern in an informal way. The email system is not a 'chat room' and the other platforms for feedback should be used such as staff meetings, staff surveys, heads and governors' briefings.

8. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, this includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops in school hours or in front of pupils, unless it is in the school staff room out of sight of the pupils, or in another designated room e.g. workroom. Staff will not use school equipment for personal use, unless in the case of an emergency call. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils. We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

9. Confidentiality

In the course of their duties, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents. They must at all times be compliant with GDPR legislation.

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

Care should be taken with information displayed on computer screens or interactive whiteboards. Sensitive details, or information likely to cause a pupil embarrassment should never be displayed in the sight of pupils. Teachers' computer screens should face away from the class where at all possible. Care also needs

to be taken with material which is printed, especially if the printer is in another room. Confidential material should not be found uncollected from printers.

Staff must operate a 'clear desk' policy which is that when staff are away from their desks there is no sensitive or confidential visible material. In conversations around the school, staff should always refer to pupils and their parents and carers respectfully and never share with other pupils or parents and carers sensitive information about pupils.

10. **Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy**

School employees must attend work in a condition to undertake their duties in a safe manner.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs impairs performance and will constitute a health and safety risk and interfere with that person's health and/or work performance. Where it is evident during working time or on school premises that a person is under the influence or has detectably taken alcohol or drugs or there is other substantial reason to believe this to be the case this will be regarded as potential gross misconduct.

The Trust believe that consuming alcohol during working time or on school premises is inappropriate and may be regarded as an act of misconduct. Likewise, the use of illegal substances will not be tolerated

If an employee is known or observed to be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol during working hours, under the influence of illegal drugs, legal highs or using, possessing, transporting, promoting, buying or selling illegal drugs, these actions may be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be suspended from work, as a precaution, whilst the circumstances are investigated in line with the disciplinary procedure. Employees should be mindful of any actions which, by association, bring Plymouth CAST into disrepute as these may lead to disciplinary action.

Concerns can be raised in the following ways:

- Voluntary self-referral- Plymouth CAST will initially address alcohol and substance misuse as a health issue, deploy skilled and compassionate management intervention, seek expert advice via Occupational Health and other sources, and, where appropriate, offer reasonable adjustment(s) to support treatment and recovery.
- Concerns raised by an employee/colleague (Confidentiality will be maintained)
- Concerns raised by or complaints from an external contact
- Observation by the direct manager of work performance and/or behaviour not meeting required standards.

Please also note that Plymouth CAST operates a no smoking policy in all its premises.

11. **Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £20 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct and updated accordingly, including any changes to their DBS status.

12. **Dress code**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice. However, staff should ensure that they dress decently, safely and appropriately for the roles they undertake.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

The judgement on what constitutes professional and appropriate rests with the headteacher or person in charge of the school.

13. **Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school, the Trust or the Catholic Church.

Staff on school trips are expected to behave as if they were in school. This Code applies to school business outside of school.

14. **Staff Voice and Well-Being**

Plymouth CAST is committed to the well-being of all its staff, please refer to the Plymouth CAST Staff emotional health and wellbeing policy for more details. Staff surveys will be used to monitor staff wellbeing on an annual basis.

The Whistleblowing Policy sets out how staff can raise concerns if they suspect any wrongdoing or if they feel their concerns have not been addressed.

15. **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every year but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the Board of Directors.

16. **Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

CAST Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct

CAST Grievance Policy and Procedure

CAST Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

CAST Finance Policy and Regulatory Framework

CAST Data Protection Policy

CAST Emotional health and wellbeing policy

CAST Whistleblowing Policy