Connect Alliance Trust

Excellence - Collaboration - Respect

Staff Code of Conduct

Adopted by

Brookburn Community Primary School

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Version Control Table

Version	Date	Author	Rationale/Summary of changes	Ratified Date

V1.1	01/09/25	Tina Smith	New CAT policy	Sept 2026
V1.2	01/09/26	Liz Hardy	Added ‘trust’ and ‘CEO’ in addition to ‘school’ and ‘Headteacher’ throughout the document to reflect the application of the policy to trust central team members. Updated KCSIE 2026	

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Aim of this code of conduct

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all Connect Alliance Trust staff to follow.

Connect Alliance Trust expects all schools to deliver an exceptional and transformative educational experience that motivates all our learners to reach their personal best and contribute positively to society. We are dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive and thriving environment that promotes respect, integrity and lifelong learning for all, regardless of background. Through a commitment to academic excellence, creativity, well-being and leadership, we inspire our pupils and staff to grow, lead and make a meaningful impact in their communities.

Employees in Connect Alliance Trust schools should ensure that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders sets a positive and professional example for pupils.

In addition to the expectations in this code of conduct, we expect that all teachers and teaching assistants will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards and Teaching Assistant Standards.

This policy forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, along with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are employed by the Connect Alliance Trust.

Employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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 school and its pupils.

1. Professional behaviour and conduct

The seven principles of public life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to **all staff** in their position as a public office-holder. These principles are:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct to ensure that public confidence in their integrity is sustained.

Staff will:

- Have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our trust and schools.
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Demonstrate a positive and professional attitude, regardless of personal circumstances.
- Take care of themselves and others affected by their activity at school and across our trust.
- Cooperate with school leaders in meeting their duties under the relevant regulations.
- Treat pupils, parents, colleagues and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- Observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position, showing acceptance and respect for the rights of others.
- Be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extracurricular trips and visits.
- Be aware that professional behaviour and conduct extends to use of school devices, internet, technology systems and AI, both online and offline.
- Maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using trust/school property and facilities.
- Act appropriately in terms of the views they express. In particular expressing political views, including through the use of school equipment and resources at all times. Refer to DFE guidance March 2025 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/political-impartiality-in-schools/political-impartiality-in-schools
- Inform their Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will not:

- Use foul or abusive language.
- Perpetrate discrimination, bullying, harassment, intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse.
- Misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience.
- Seek to bring our trust or schools into disrepute.
- Use trust or school resources for political purposes.

2. Safeguarding pupils

In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education 2026' (KCSIE), staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures which also includes the Prevent initiative. They will ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our Trust and school child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on CPOMS, our Every System for all policies and procedures and also on each of our school's website. New staff will also be given access to the policies on arrival and all staff must sign on CPOMS every year to confirm they have read the updated policy.

2.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the trust central team or school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, 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 – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. For a trust central team member, this will be the CEO or a member of the trust executive team, or the chair of the trust where the CEO is the subject of the allegation. For a school staff member, this will be the Headteacher or the deputy Headteacher, or the chair of governors where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

2.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm

threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can’t easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed and the staff member supported to correct it at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

2.3 Whistleblowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff’s health and safety being compromised
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher or any member of the Central Trust/Executive team or it is believed they

may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust. If the concern is about the Chief Executive Officer, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of Trustees.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our trust's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

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3. Appearance and dress

Employees are individually responsible for their general presentation, appearance and personal hygiene and have a responsibility to consider how their appearance may be perceived by others.

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner for their role. This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- Is appropriate to working in a school setting i.e. looks smart/professional (No low cut tops, no midriff showing, no flipflops, no comercial football kits),
- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding i.e. staff should dress in a way that ‘it can’t be looked down, up or through’.
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive
- Not wear clothing that could have implications for the health and safety of themselves, or others in their care.
- Ensure that, if visible, tattoos do not cause offence to others; if tattoos are likely to cause offence, they must be covered up whilst in work.
- Ensure that jewellery and piercings are minimal and in the health and safety interests of both staff and children, avoid anything that could catch or be caught by pupils.

Our trust and schools will make reasonable adjustments to dress expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs.

4. Attendance

The school expects that staff will:

- 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 trust's Staff Leave of Absence Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.

- Follow the trust's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.
- Staff to sign in and out using Inventry system.

5. Conduct outside of work

Staff may undertake work outside of trust and school work, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the trust and/or school.

Staff will not engage in outside work or activities which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the trust and/or school, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the trust and school community. Staff will also not engage in outside work at a level which may contravene The Working Time Regulations 1998 or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff committing offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary procedures in line with the trust Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the trust and/or school, school community or employer into disrepute. This is explored further in the Acceptable use of technology section of this policy.

6. Smoking, e-cigarettes, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke or vape on, or within close proximity of the trust or school premises and whenever in the sight of pupils, parents or visitors.

Staff will not smoke or vape whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the trust and/or school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the trust's and school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

7. Health and safety

Staff will:

- Be familiar with, and adhere to, the trust and school Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.

- Comply with health and safety regulations, adhering to any rules, routines and procedures in place and cooperate with trust and school leaders and colleagues on matters relating to health and safety.
- Use the correct equipment and tools for the job and any protective clothing supplied.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the CEO or Headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).
- Adhere to their common law duty to act as a prudent parent would when in charge of pupils.

8. Declaration of interests

An employee is required to declare this where they are involved with a group or organisation that would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

Employees should also consider carefully whether they need to declare to the trust and/or school their relationship with any individual(s) where this might cause a conflict with school activities. For example, a relationship with a Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the school. 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 take advice from their trust or school leaders or union representative.

9. Maintaining professional relationships with pupils

The school expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

Where inappropriate contact is made with pupils, this will be raised with the CEO or Headteacher, and handled in line with the trust and school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

If a pupil is consistently attempting to befriend or contact a member of staff on social media, the member of staff will inform the CEO or Headteacher as soon as possible.

10. Transporting pupils

Staff are aware that the safety and welfare of pupils is the responsibility of the school until pupils are with their parents. The school is committed to taking all possible safety measures to ensure the safety of pupils.

When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and adhere to the appropriate school safety policies and risk assessments.

Staff will ensure that they:

- Hold a full valid driving licence for the category of vehicle being driven and providing their licence and insurance details to the CEO or Headteacher where required.
- Drive in accordance with the laws of the road and Highway Code.
- Check before each journey that the vehicle is roadworthy, e.g. tyres are properly inflated and meet legal requirements.
- Ensure that they are fit to drive; where their fitness to drive may be impaired, e.g. due to a medical condition or taking medication, they inform their line manager as soon as possible and notify the DVLA where required.
- Notify the Headteacher where there is any change in their circumstance in relation to driving at work, e.g. if they acquire penalty points on their licence for motoring offences outside of work.
- Staff will only use their own vehicle to transport pupils where there is no practical or reasonable alternative, and where agreed upon by the Headteacher and parents in advance of the journey. Only members of staff with the appropriate level of DBS check and safeguarding and behaviour management training will be permitted to transport pupils.

When using their own vehicle to transport pupils, staff will ensure that their driving insurance is valid for the purposes of business use, including cover for persons travelling as business passengers.

Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

Staff will not offer pupils transport outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or if a pupil is at risk. These circumstances will be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and the pupil's parents.

11. Acceptable use of technology

Staff are aware of the benefits and challenges associated with using technology, including AI, in school. When using technology, staff will always adhere to the various procedures, freedoms and limitations outlined in the relevant school policies, which include but are not limited to:

- Online Safety Policy
- Staff ICT and Electronic Devices Policy

- Safe Use of AI Policy

All staff will maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology and read, sign and adhere to the trust and school Technology Acceptable Use Agreement.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse.

Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology, including AI, appropriately while under their care.

11.1 Personal devices

Personal devices such as mobile phones and tablets are used in accordance with the provisions outlined in the policies above and within the Staff ICT and Electronic Devices Policy and the Device User Agreement. Any personal electronic device that is brought into school or trust offices is the responsibility of the user.

Personal devices are only permitted to be used in the following locations:

- Staffrooms
- Offices

Staff are not permitted to use their personal devices in front of pupils, other than in an emergency.

Staff are not permitted to use their personal devices to take photos or videos of pupils.

11.2 Social media

Staff will be aware that their conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school and across the trust.

Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the trust, the school, or the school community into disrepute.

Staff should employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.

The school understands that some staff are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

12. Photography, images and videos

Photographs, images and videos will only be taken using school photography and video equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited and taking images of pupils will not be taken for personal use.

Staff will ensure that imagery and videos will be kept in an appropriate and secure place in school.

No pupil will be photographed in a state of undress or semi-undress, or in a situation which could be considered as indecent or sexual.

Photographs and video footage of pupils, school personnel, or visitors will not be used in the generation of new or composite images via artificial intelligence (AI).

Staff will not take images of a pupil's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse), even if they have been requested to do so by children's social care and staff members will not make audio recordings of any disclosure made by a pupil.

Consent for taking and use of photographs will be obtained from parents and carers.

Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

13. Premises, equipment and communication

Staff are responsible for:

- Securing windows and doors when rooms are not in use.
- Ensuring that visitors sign in and out at the school office.
- Challenging any unidentified individuals and notifying the CEO or Headteacher of any unauthorised person.
- Securing valuable equipment after use.
- Ensuring the security of trust and school equipment when taken off the school premises, such as laptops.
- Acting in accordance with the trust Data Protection Policy, ensuring that data and information is secure.
- Reporting any security concerns to the CEO or Headteacher.
- Reporting major security concerns directly to the police or emergency services, where appropriate.
- Carrying their trust and/or school ID with them at all times.
- Being responsible for the security of any of their own property that they bring to the trust or school site.
- Where cupboards or drawers are locked, keys should be in school or trust offices and made available to the headteacher or CEO on request.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the CEO or Headteacher.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity, AI use, or document production on trust or school-owned equipment, 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.

Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the systems manager, only with the permission of the governing board or trust board as appropriate.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the CEO, Headteacher or systems manager. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the trust offices or school when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the CEO or Headteacher.

14. Data protection and confidentiality

All staff will be aware of their responsibilities as laid out in the trust Data Protection Policy and in line with the core principles of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the trust, any school within the trust, its employees, children, families or the LA to other parties. The only exception to this being when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Where a staff member believes a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy, this must be reported through the processes detailed in the policy.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the Headteacher in writing in accordance with the trust's Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy.

15. Probity of records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications, or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.