

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies across the organisation – 15th December 2017.

Jay Mercer
Chair of OHCAT Board



Darren Coghlan
Chair of OHC Board



Staff Code of Conduct

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. OHC&AT recognises that successful support for pupils and students is wholly dependent upon the ethos of the organisation. It is incumbent on the whole OHC&AT community to promote positive behaviour and maintain a positive regard towards pupils/students and colleagues.

This policy sets out the expectations of good conduct from OHC&AT staff across a number of key areas. The Code of Conduct relates to all employees regardless of working hours or length of service.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust is a family of providers working for mutual benefit. We believe that together we can offer the very best for our pupils and students and for their local communities.

All employees across the organisation are expected to operate with high standards of good conduct. If you have a private or personal interest in any matter, as a member of OHC&AT staff you must not do anything to let that interest influence any action you take. A good test is to ask yourself whether others might think you could have been unduly influenced in the decision you took. Any situations where this issue might arise should be discussed with your line manager. If you are in any doubt, err on the side of caution.

Every person in Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust contributes to it being the way it is. Many staff put lots of time and effort into working as a team and making it an enjoyable and rewarding place for pupils/students and staff. Please always tell your line manager or another appropriate person if there is anything which needs addressing, celebrating or communicating.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Within OHC&AT

Directors will:

- Review and approve this policy every three years

The Executive Senior Leadership Team will:

- Review this policy every three years in consultation with staff

Within each OHC&AT provision

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure staff are aware of this policy and related documentation

All staff will:

- Ensure they are aware of and abide by this policy and related documentation
- Adhere to appropriate confidentiality

ABSENTEEISM

Unauthorised absence from work is extremely disruptive to pupils/students, colleagues and the organisation as a whole. Staff have a duty to report absence to their line manager in accordance with the reporting procedure within each setting.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol in the workplace may lead to disciplinary action that could result in dismissal. The following rules apply:

- If you are found to be consuming alcohol/illegal drugs or deemed to be under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs in the workplace or during your working hours, this may be treated as gross misconduct under OHC&AT's disciplinary procedure.
- The possession of drugs for any reason other than medical is forbidden.

We may ask you to undertake a medical examination if we believe that you have a problem in relation to drugs and/or alcohol, in order to assess whether this is affecting your ability to work. You may be suspended from work until the matter is resolved. OHC&AT will decide whether to treat it as a disciplinary matter.

We will inform the police if we believe there has been an abuse of controlled drugs for which criminal controls are appropriate by any member of staff, either in the workplace or when working on behalf of OHC&AT outside OHC&AT premises.

BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE WORK

Normally OHC&AT has no jurisdiction over staff outside working hours. However, your activities outside work should not adversely affect the organisation. The following may result in disciplinary action:

- Bringing the name of the organisation into disrepute
- Adverse publicity
- Actions that result in loss of faith in the organisation by third parties
- Actions that result in loss of faith in the integrity of the individual (this includes harassment, bullying and any other inappropriate behaviour)

The detriment incurred to OHC&AT will determine the level of misconduct and most suitable disciplinary stage considering the circumstances. Your employment could be terminated if your actions cause extreme embarrassment or serious reputational damage to OHC&AT.

Disciplinary action will only be taken after OHC&AT has fully investigated the facts and will follow the Disciplinary Procedure.

CLEAN DESK POLICY

In order to reduce the risk of unauthorised access or loss of information, OHC&AT operates a clean desk policy across the organisation:

- At known extended periods away from your desk, such as a lunch break, sensitive working papers should be placed in locked drawers.
- At the end of the working day you should tidy your desk and store all papers and other work-related materials/storage devices in a suitable place e.g. locking desk pedestal or filing cabinet.
- Personal or confidential business information must be protected using security features provided, for example secure print on printers.
- Computers must be logged off/locked or protected with a screen locking mechanism controlled by a password when unattended.
- Take care not to leave confidential material on printers or photocopiers.
- All business-related printed matter must be disposed of using confidential waste bins or shredders.

COMPLIANCE

Staff are expected to read and abide by all relevant OHC&AT policies.

Staff have a responsibility to report any illegal or improper conduct by colleagues. Please refer to the Whistle Blowing Policy for further information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is the responsibility of all staff to maintain appropriate confidentiality across the organisation.

All information relating to pupils and students obtained by any individual working for OHC&AT is confidential to the organisation. Such information must not be disclosed to anyone outside the organisation without the informed consent of a line manager.

Confidentiality also applies to other aspects of OHC&AT operation. This includes but is not limited to:

- Accounts information
- Technical information
- HR information

- Marketing and sales information
- Pricing information

Staff must respect the confidentiality of information held by stakeholders. Staff should not read any documentation on stakeholder premises that has not been given to them by the stakeholder specifically to read, or repeat any information that they may come across during the course of their work e.g. an overheard telephone conversation.

The non-authorised photographing, recording or copying of confidential information belonging to pupils/students and other stakeholders by using, for example, computers, phones, cameras or memory sticks, may be considered a breach of confidentiality.

Staff are expected to use OHC&AT IT equipment to conduct OHC&AT business, rather than personal devices, in order to maintain appropriate confidentiality and safeguarding standards. In particular, staff **must not** take photographs of pupils or students using personal devices.

OHC&AT will regard any breach of this confidentiality agreement as a disciplinary offence and serious breaches may lead to dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

CRIMINAL OFFENCES

Any staff member who is convicted of a criminal offence, or is indicted for a serious criminal offence that could potentially result in a custodial sentence, while working for OHC&AT must immediately inform their line manager or Human Resources.

This information will be treated as strictly confidential. OHC&AT reserves the right to consider the future employment status of the staff member if the offence or alleged offence has a direct implication for their work or the reputation of the organisation.

DRESS CODE

We expect you to dress appropriately for the job that you are doing. Please remember that you will come into contact with pupils/students and members of the public, so it is important to present a professional image with regard to your appearance, standards of dress and personal hygiene.

During business hours, staff are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their position. Staff who appear for work inappropriately dressed will be sent home and directed to return to work in appropriate attire. Under such circumstances, staff will not be compensated for the time away from work. The following guidelines should be followed regarding appropriate attire:

Unacceptable items:

- Tattered, frayed or worn garments (general scruffiness)
- Items with holes as a design feature e.g. ripped jeans

- Clothing featuring offensive content e.g. profanities, derogatory remarks, explicit images etc.
- Any revealing items of clothing

Staff should also take health and safety considerations into account when choosing attire, for example:

- Shoes may need to be flat and not open, in order to avoid injury to feet and to be able to move quickly to support a pupil or student
- Body piercings may need to be removed in order to avoid injury
- Long hair may need to be tied back depending on the work setting

EMAIL SECURITY AND ETIQUETTE

Security

If your email contains sensitive or confidential material (i.e. contains personal details of an individual, is confidential or contains information that should not be shared with any other person), ensure you send any confidential/sensitive details in a secure format, preferably encrypted. If encryption is not available, you should send a password-protected Word document attached to the email and communicate the password to the receiver via text or verbally.

- Do not use simple passwords.
- Do not share your password with another individual and always log off the system when you have finished working on your computer/laptop/tablet
- Do not insert details of an individual in the subject field of an email. Keep your subject title generic to the content without being too specific.

Etiquette

Write carefully. Once you send an email, you cannot take it back or make it disappear. The reality is that your messages may be saved for a very long time. They may also be read inadvertently by others, used to provide evidence in employment cases, or forwarded to others without your knowledge.

Be courteous. Use upper and lowercase text, left justified. Using all uppercase letters gives the impression of SHOUTING. Most people find it annoying and those who are visually impaired can find capitals and fully justified text harder to read.

Be aware. Emails may convey a difficult or sensitive message in a light that was not necessarily intended. A written message could be misunderstood by the recipient. Difficult messages are better given face to face.

Be diplomatic. Criticism is always harsher when written, and email can be easily forwarded.

Be calm. You may have misunderstood what was meant. Don't reply if you're angry.

Be brief. Don't include background images, pictures, animations, etc. unless they are critical to your message.

Be precise. Address your messages carefully. Some addresses may belong to a group, even though the address appears to belong to just one person.

What not to do

Do not get fooled by Internet hoaxes and computer virus myths.

Do not forward a so-called virus alert to everyone you know – instead report the email to the IT Helpdesk and delete the message.

Do not forward emails unless you are certain it is agreeable to the sender. Gain permission from the author if necessary.

Do not respond to an email unless a response is requested from the sender or they have particularly gone out of their way to help you, in which case you may wish to thank them for their services.

Don't forget – people can receive a high volume of emails. It is often quicker and easier to communicate with a telephone call.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff have a duty to apply managerial instructions and any requirements established to ensure the health and safety of pupils/students, staff, other individuals providing services to OHC&AT, the general public and themselves while on OHC&AT premises. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy for further information.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Any invention, improvement, design, process, information, copyright work, trade mark or trade name or set-up made, created or discovered by staff members in the course of their employment (whether capable of being patented or registered or not) in conjunction with or in any way affecting or relating to the business of OHC&AT or of any associated organisation or capable of being used or adapted for use in or in connection with such business (Intellectual Property Rights) shall immediately be disclosed to the organisation and shall (subject to section 39 to 43 Patents Act 1977) belong to and be the absolute property of the employer or such associated organisations as the employer may direct.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVES

Staff have a duty to comply with all reasonable management directives and to seek clarification of any instruction if they are unclear.

The only circumstances in which deliberate failure to follow a management directive is acceptable is if it would involve contravening statutory or regulatory requirements or where the directive is entirely unreasonable, such as in cases of bullying.

In such cases staff should immediately raise the issue with their line manager in order to seek clarification. If clarification is not provided, staff should refer the matter to the next level of management or raise it with HR.

PROPERTY

Staff must take reasonable care of OHC&AT property and equipment. Property may not be removed from OHC&AT premises or destroyed without permission from senior management.

OHC&AT is not responsible for any loss of staff members' cash, valuables or personal possessions. Staff are advised not to bring large amounts of cash or other valuables onto OHC&AT premises.

Staff have a duty to protect and respect all equipment provided by OHC&AT for their individual use, which must be used only for the purpose intended.

Upon leaving OHC&AT employment, staff must return all equipment and property belonging to the organisation including computer, mobile phone, tools, keys, entry pass, records, documents, accounts, letters, papers (including all copies, summaries and extracts) within your possession or control belonging or relating to OHC&AT affairs and business.

OHC&AT may deduct the cost of replacement of any items not returned, or repair of items that are returned damaged, from your salary or any monies owed to you upon termination of employment. You agree to any such deduction pursuant to part II of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

PUNCTUALITY

Staff are required to make every effort to start work at the designated time and to work their contracted hours. Poor time-keeping imposes extra burdens on colleagues and the organisation as a whole. However, OHC&AT recognises that unexpected domestic or transport difficulties can occasionally affect punctuality; staff should report any such difficulties immediately to their line manager.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

Every member of staff is expected to maintain effective working relationships with colleagues and to apply a positive and cooperative approach to work.

Staff are expected to be courteous at all times. Inappropriate language, rudeness, disruptive behaviour and insubordination may result in disciplinary action being taken.

When close relationships develop between members of staff leading to marriage, civil partnership or cohabitation, staff should be mindful of the potential impact on their work and other working relationships and should not be responsible for the final decision regarding recruitment, selection, promotion or setting of pay for anyone with whom they have a personal relationship. Professional behaviour is expected at all times during working hours.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Staff should at all times maintain a professional relationship with pupils and students. No attempt should be made to build or encourage any friendship with pupils/students or their families outside of work. This includes telephone and personal contact and connecting via social media.

Staff must not give their personal contact details to pupils/students including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers. All correspondence should be via OHC&AT systems.

SAFEGUARDING

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. **All staff** are required to read and abide by OHC&AT's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, as well as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Part 1 as a minimum).

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted in or on the grounds of any OHC&AT site, or in its vehicles, or in the private vehicles of employees while being used for work assigned by OHC&AT, by anyone at any time.

Staff are not permitted to smoke in the presence of students when away from OHC&AT sites, even if they are in an environment where smoking is deemed acceptable.

The policy does not permit smoking by non-OHC&AT staff who are escorting or supporting a pupil or student during a session at any time of day or evening either at or away from our sites.

Neither does it permit smoking by non-OHC&AT staff who are escorting or supporting a pupil or student to or from any OHC&AT setting during or outside of session hours while on OHC&AT premises.

Staff are not entitled to smoking breaks during working hours.

Staff who do smoke during their lunch break are expected to be discreet and to avoid doing so directly in view of the OHC&AT setting at which they are working.

E-cigarettes, personal vaporizers (PVs), and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) are battery operated devices that mimic tobacco smoking and are often used as a replacement for cigarettes. They produce a vapour, including flavoured aromas either with or without nicotine, rather than traditional smoke. However, the vapour from E-cigarettes might be annoying to some employees and could potentially provide a health risk for others through passive consumption (like passive smoking) as the long term health effects of E-cigarettes are unknown. Therefore these devices and similar products are included in this policy in the same way as ordinary smoking implements.

It is recognised that some employees use E-cigarettes as part of a plan to stop smoking. OHC&AT is committed to assisting staff to stop smoking in all forms, and will work with NHS services so that support is available. Please follow the link for advice on stopping smoking: [NHS smoke free service](#).

STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA

Occasionally an OHC&AT provision may be approached by the media for comment or participation. Any such requests should be referred to the Head/Principal of that provision in the first instance, and to the Marketing Manager, for action.

THE BRIBERY ACT

Gratuities/gift policy

You must disclose to your line manager any monetary and/or material gifts or services which have a value in excess of £50, from potential or actual pupils/students, families, suppliers or any other person having similar connection to the organisation. Failure to report such gifts may result in disciplinary action. If you are not sure whether to accept a gift, you should discuss it with your line manager prior to acceptance.

The Bribery Act's Offences

1. Active bribery: promising or giving a financial or other advantage.
2. Passive bribery: agreeing to receive or accepting a financial or other advantage.
3. The failure of commercial organisations to prevent bribery by an associated person.

Bribery

The risk of bribery is also controlled by OHC&AT Financial Regulations. Transactions have to be approved and must fall within the constraints set for their post. All expenditure (including expenses and credit cards) is approved by line managers and/or the Executive Senior Leadership Team. Ultimately OHC&AT is empowered to

question financial transactions. If a member of staff breaches the policy, this could lead to disciplinary action.

WORK EXPECTATIONS

Staff are required to fulfil the requirements of their role and maintain the standards of performance as outlined in their job description, statement of particulars and OHC&AT's policies and procedures. Professional staff are also bound by standards of professional conduct.

In particular, it is a core requirement of all OHC&AT staff that they understand and fulfil their duties in relation to child protection/safeguarding and equality and diversity.

Please refer to the OHC&AT policies and procedures on appraisal, capability, grievance, disciplinary and staff development for further information.

POLICY REVIEW DETAILS

<i>Version:</i>	1.3
<i>Reviewer:</i>	Dr Caroline Allen
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	15 th December 2017
<i>Due for review:</i>	Autumn 2020

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Appraisal Policy
Capability Procedure
Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary Procedure
Equality and Diversity Policy
E-Safety Policy
Grievance Procedure
Health and Safety Policy
Induction and Probation Policy
IT Acceptable Use Policy
Recruitment and Selection Procedure
Whistleblowing Policy