



# CODE OF CONDUCT

| <b>Document Control</b>  |                               |                     |                               |
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| <b>THIS POLICY DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS ON OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC ACADEMIES TRUST</b> |                               |                     |                               |

## 1. PURPOSE AND STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 1.1 Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust's (OLICAT) ethos states 'We are working together to ensure that all children across our Catholic schools, are provided with the best possible academic, spiritual, and moral education, within a safe and happy environment. Our catholic faith is central to the life of the family of schools which make up the Trust. Rooted in Gospel values, we recognise each member of our community as a child of God. With a focus on prayer, we are driven to strive for excellence. Through the example of Jesus Christ, we encourage each other to fulfil our potential.'
- 1.2 This Code of Conduct aims to set the standards of behaviour that is expected within the Trust, its schools, and academies in accordance with both OLICAT's ethos and mission statement; Inspired by Christ to fulfil potential, achieve excellence, serve and build hope for all.
- 1.3 This Code of Conduct provides clear guidance of expected behaviour of all staff (including temporary and agency), Directors, LAC members, governors and volunteers of OLICAT as all have a duty to keep the protection and welfare of both staff and pupils paramount.
- 1.4 This policy aims to achieve a culture within OLICAT of staff executing the highest professional standards, integrity, and mutual respect for others regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion, pregnancy or marital status<sup>1</sup>. This culture applies to all adults and pupils of the Trust.
- 1.5 In accordance with KCSIE<sup>2</sup> (paragraph 99, page 27), this Code of Conduct includes low level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, plus acceptable use of technologies (including use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.
- 1.6 This Code does not provide an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance isn't clear in this policy, staff are expected to seek HR advice together with using their professional judgement in accordance with the circumstances.
- 1.7 Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Teachers' Standards<sup>3</sup> state that 'the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity, have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up to date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships and work with parents in the best interested of their pupils'. The Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of teachers employed within the Trust. Headteacher's are also expected to meet the standards of the Teachers' Standards together with the Headteachers' Standards<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Equality Act 2010

<sup>2</sup> *Keeping Children Safe In Education - 2024*

<sup>3</sup> Teachers' Standards – DfE – July 2011

<sup>4</sup> Headteachers' Standards – DfE – October 2020

- 2.2 All staff should be cognisant of setting examples of behaviour and conduct that can be copied by pupils.
- 2.3 All staff are expected to be responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should always act with personal and professional integrity.
- 2.4 High standards of professional conduct are required to be maintained by all staff to safeguard pupils but also protect staff from allegations. Staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a situation where their actions may be open to criticism or misinterpretation.
- 2.5 All staff should at all times be conscious of their own responsibility to maintain their own reputation together with the reputation of the Trust, its schools, and academies both inside and outside of work and working hours.
- 2.6 All staff are expected to maintain the Catholic character of the schools and therefore not behave in such a way that could be deemed as detrimental or prejudicial to the Catholic environment of the Trust.
- 2.7 OLICAT schools' behaviour and values explains the general principles in relation to behaviour and discipline for all staff and students. This underpins the Trust's duty of care to students and employees, promote teaching and learning and high standards of attainment and, preserve the reputation of the schools.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **OLICAT** – Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (the Trust)
- 3.2 **All staff** – Teachers, support staff, Trust employees, temporary, agency, supply, Trust directors, volunteers, LAC members, governors, casual staff,
- 3.3 **Conduct** – An employee's behaviour in the workplace<sup>5</sup>
- 3.4 **SEL** – Trust Strategic Lead within whose role contains those duties of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

### 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 This policy applies to all staff (including temporary, supply, agency), Directors of the Trust, Local Academy Committee members, volunteers.
- 4.2 Review and implementation of this policy will be conducted by OLICAT together with the individual school's governance arrangements.
- 4.3 All staff are responsible for being familiar with the policy and understand its contents and implications.
- 4.4 Employees of external contracts and providers of services are expected to abide by the provisions of this policy, and it will be a term of their engagement whilst working on OLICAT premises.
- 4.5 It is the responsibility of individual schools/academies' Local Academy Committees via the Senior Management Teams to ensure that this policy is implemented at the local level. However, ultimate accountability as a whole multi-Academy Trust rests with the Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academy Trust Board, therefore any decisions that have an impact on resources including staffing, structures, or compliance must be referred to the Trust Board

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<sup>5</sup> ACAS Guide – Discipline and Grievances at work

if they exceed delegated authority. This is essential to ensure that the legal obligations of OLICAT are met and that the Trust maintains robust systems and processes that deliver effective governance.

## **5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 ACAS Code of Practice - Discipline and Grievances at Work – March 2015
- 5.2 ACAS Guide – Discipline and Grievance at Work – July 2020
- 5.3 Teachers’ Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 (Amended 2014)
- 5.4 Teachers’ Standards – Department for Education – July 2011
- 5.5 Headteachers Standard – Department for Education – October 2020
- 5.6 Teacher misconduct – disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession – May 2020
- 5.7 Keeping Children Safe In Education – September 2024
- 5.8 Working Together to Safeguard Children – December 2023
- 5.9 Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR May 2018
- 5.10 Equality Act 2010
- 5.11 Bribery Act 2010
- 5.12 Working Time Regulations 1998

## **6. ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

- 6.1 OLICAT Disciplinary policy – This will be applied if staff breach the Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 OLICAT Safeguarding/Child Protection policy
- 6.3 OLICAT Whistleblowing policy
- 6.4 OLICAT Complaints policy
- 6.5 OLICAT Equality and Diversity policy
- 6.6 OLICAT Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- 6.7 OLICAT Health and Safety Policy
- 6.8 Individual School’s/Academy’s Codes of conduct & associated policies

## **7. GENERAL OBLIGATIONS**

All OLICAT staff should always set an example in terms of:

- 7.1 Maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality;
- 7.2 Not using offensive or inappropriate language on the school/academy premises under any circumstances;
- 7.3 Always treat staff, pupils and other visitors with dignity and respect. This includes but not limited to any unacceptable behaviour that could be interpreted as embarrassing, humiliating, discriminatory or degrading;
- 7.4 Act with due regard to exercising duty of care to both students and colleagues ensuring the safety and welfare of pupils is paramount;

- 7.5 Have due regard to the ethos and values of the Trust and schools/academies and not behave in any way that could bring the Trust or schools/academies into disrepute.
- 7.6 Observing professional and appropriate boundaries with pupils at all times as staff are in a position of trust.

## **8. SAFEGUARDING**

- 8.1 Staff have a professional and moral duty to safeguard pupils from harm or being at risk of harm in any format including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, female genital mutilation or radicalism. Staff are responsible for their own behaviour and conduct and should avoid any conduct that may lead to any reasonable person questioning an employee's motivation or intervention.
- 8.2 All staff must ensure they have been fully trained with regards to safeguarding and have read and abide by OLICAT Safeguarding & child protection policies.
- 8.3 All staff should inform their school's senior leaders and Dedicated Safeguarding Leads if there are any situations/personal relationships that could impact the school's reputation within the community and/or an individual's suitability to undertake their role; in such cases, a risk assessment should be completed.

## **9. STAFF/PUPIL INTERACTION**

These are certain circumstances that staff should particularly be aware of when interacting with pupils:

### **9.1 PHYSICAL CONTACT & INTERVENTION**

- 9.1.1 Any physical contact with pupils should be avoided where possible but on occasions, professional judgement may need to be exercised and contact is appropriate. This could include congratulatory handshakes, guiding of pupils to a particular location or a gentle hug if appropriate.
- 9.1.2 In caring for the very youngest children in our schools, professional judgement must be exercised with age-appropriate consideration of the extent of the necessary contact.
- 9.1.3 Save for circumstances in paragraph 9.6.1 below, there must never be any physical contact from staff if pupils are getting changed or showering; respect and privacy must be maintained at all times.
- 9.1.4 Staff must not develop any personal or sexual relationship with pupils or engage in any sexual activity. In accordance with KCSIE<sup>6</sup> and legislation<sup>7</sup> it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person (adult) is in a position of trust in respect of that child even if the relationship is consensual.

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<sup>6</sup> *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024*

<sup>7</sup> *Sexual Offences Act 2003*

## **9.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- 9.2.1 Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible. Personal details including mobile phone numbers, email addresses, social media profiles must not be exchanged between staff and pupils.

## **9.3 CHILDREN IN DISTRESS**

- 9.3.1 Occasionally a pupil may be in distress and in need of comfort including age appropriate physical contact. Staff should be aware of their own actions ensuring their contact is non-threatening, intrusive or open to misinterpretation.

## **9.4 ONE TO ONE WORKING**

- 9.4.1 If staff must spend time working on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that the meeting occurs in a location that others can access, others can see into the space and a colleague or line manager is fully aware of the meeting.

## **9.5 INFATUATIONS**

- 9.5.1 Occasionally a pupil may develop an infatuation or an over familiarity with a member of staff. All staff are expected to manage such situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all affected.
- 9.5.2 Staff who become aware that a pupil may have become infatuated either with themselves or with a colleague must report it without delay to either their line manager or a member of the senior management team.

## **9.6 INTIMATE/PERSONAL CARE**

- 9.6.1 Staff who are required to assist a pupil with personal care should ensure another member of staff is in the vicinity who is aware of the task being undertaken and is visible/audible.

## **9.7 TRANSPORTATION**

- 9.7.1 On occasions, staff and/or volunteers may need to transport students. Such trips should be risk assessed and practical transport provided where possible. If individual transportation is required both the private vehicle and driver must have valid driving and insurance requirements.

# **10.COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 10.1 Staff should not make available to pupils their social media profiles and when using such platforms ensure their settings are set to private.
- 10.2 Staff should never attempt to contact either pupils or their parents via personal social media.
- 10.3 Staff must not post material on social media sites that could bring the Trust and thereby the schools/academies into disrepute.
- 10.4 Staff are expected to report any inappropriate social media contact/usage/postings by a colleague particularly where it may be regarded as bringing the Trust into disrepute.

## **11.ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

- 11.1 No images of pupils must be published either in print or online without the express consent of the pupil and their parents/guardians.
- 11.2 Staff must not use school technology (including laptops, mobile phones, tablets, computers) to view material that is illegal, inappropriate, or liable to be deemed offensive. This includes but is not limited to, circulating obscene emails, gambling, pornographic material, or other inappropriate content.
- 11.3 Staff must not use personal mobiles, laptops, tablets or other school equipment for personal use during school hours in front of pupils or where professionally inappropriate. Photographs of pupils must not be taken by personal mobile phones or cameras.

## **12.CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 12.1 Staff, as part of their role, may have access to sensitive and confidential information relating to both staff and pupils of which staff are expected to treat such information with discretion and integrity. Staff must not use confidential or personal information for either their own or other's advantage and, should not be used to intimidate, embarrass, or humiliate pupils. In exceptional circumstances, information that is regarded as confidential but is actually a threat to the safety or welfare of a pupil may be disclosed.
- 12.2 Confidential information relating to both pupils and staff must be held securely and in accordance with Data Protection legislation<sup>8</sup>

## **13.HONESTY & INTEGRITY**

- 13.1 All staff must maintain high standards of professional conduct and behaviour at all times being cognisant their position requires an implied level of trust, honesty, and integrity.
- 13.2 Honesty and integrity is expected of all staff when dealing with Trust resources including financial, facilities, property, equipment, IT, printing, telephone use.
- 13.3 All staff must not accept any type of bribe<sup>9</sup> that would encourage improper activity or actions as part of their role within the Trust.
- 13.4 Staff will ensure the information they provide upon appointment is accurate including qualification, statutory requirements<sup>10</sup> and professional experience.

## **14.PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

- 14.1 All staff must dress in a professional and business-like manner.
- 14.2 Outfits must not be revealing.
- 14.3 Tattoos should be hidden under clothing.
- 14.4 Piercings should be minimal.

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<sup>8</sup> Data Protection Act 2018

<sup>9</sup> Bribery Act 2010

<sup>10</sup> DBS certificate, Right to work documents, Pre-employment checks

14.5 Clothing should not reveal any offensive or political slogans.

14.6 No denim or jeans.

## **15.EQUALITY**

15.1 All staff must maintain the highest professional standards, integrity and mutual respect for others regardless of age, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership<sup>11</sup>.

15.2 All staff must ensure the dignity and rights of members of the local community, visitors, volunteers, pupils and other staff are recognised and protected at all times.

## **16.RESPECT AND DIGNITY**

16.1 The dignity of all staff and pupils must be respected and staff should behave courteously and considerately towards all they come into contact with.

16.2 All pupils have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any language that could be deemed as sarcastic, demeaning, or insensitive.

16.3 Staff must not shout aggressively, bully or hector in any circumstance.

16.4 Staff must not use physical intimidation or invade a pupil's space.

## **17.GIFTS & HOSPITALITY**

17.1 The only occasions whereby staff can accept gifts from pupils are for celebrations e.g., end of the school year, Christmas.

17.2 Gifts from staff to pupils is not acceptable.

17.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates must be declared to either the Trust SEL or Headteacher where appropriate.

17.4 Staff must declare any business interests outside of the school/academy that may be connected either to the supply of goods/services to the school/academy or be rewarded through association to the school/academy.

## **18.SUBSTANCES**

### **18.1 SMOKING**

18.1.1 Staff are not allowed to smoke<sup>12</sup> or vape anywhere on the Trust, school, or academies' premises.

18.1.2 Staff are not allowed to smoke or vape in any vehicles hired by the Trust, schools or academies and staff should not smoke in any private vehicle that is transporting pupils.

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<sup>11</sup> Equality Act 2010

<sup>12</sup> This includes e-cigarettes

## **18.2 ALCOHOL**

- 18.2.1 Alcohol must not be consumed on the premises except in exceptional circumstances when permission has been granted by either the Trust SEL or Headteacher.
- 18.2.2 Staff should not be working under the influence of alcohol; any member of staff working under the influence of alcohol will be immediately suspended and investigated.

## **18.3 DRUGS**

- 18.3.1 Staff should not be working under the influence of illicit and/or unlawful drugs; any member of staff working under the influence of illicit and/or unlawful drugs will be immediately suspended and investigated.
- 18.3.2 Any member of staff prescribed medication that affects their ability to carry out their work within the school/academy/Trust and fails to report the impact on them will be immediately suspended and investigated.

## **19.CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK**

- 19.1 All staff must not engage in conduct outside of work that could seriously damage the reputation of either the Trust or school/academy or, their own personal or professional reputation.
- 19.2 All staff should be aware that any conduct outside of work that breaches a statutory restriction could result in dismissal e.g. losing a driving licence when the role requires the post holder to drive.
- 19.3 Staff who wish to undertake work outside of the school, whether paid or voluntary, must assess that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust, school or academy and is not to a level that contravenes either the Working Time Regulations<sup>13</sup> or the employee's work performance.
- 19.4 Staff wishing to undertake other paid work outside of the school must seek the permission of the Headteacher or SEL to ensure that neither the Working Time Regulations, the employee's work performance is affected or does not contravene time allocated for preparation or assessment in their substantive role with the Trust.

***END OF DOCUMENT***

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<sup>13</sup> Working Time Regulations 1998