Inspiring Futures through Learning

IFtL Staff Code of Conduct

Policy name:	Staff Code of Conduct – Core Values
Date relevant from:	September 2025
Date to be reviewed:	*Recent changes in Legislation will be read and used to review this Policy.*
Role of reviewer:	IFtL HR Manager
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Policy level:**	1
Relevant to:	All employees through all IFtL schools and departments
Approved by:	IFtL Board of Trustees
Approval date:	28 August 2025

Key:

**** Publication on website:***

IFtL website		**School website**	
1	Statutory publication	A	Statutory publication
2	Good practice	B	Good practice
3	Not required	C	Not required

***** Policy level:***

1. Trust wide:
   - This one policy is relevant to everyone and consistently applied across all schools and Trust departments with no variations.
     - *Approved by the IFtL Board of Trustees.*

2. Trust core values:
   - This policy defines the values to be incorporated fully in all other policies on this subject across all schools and Trust departments. This policy should therefore from the basis of a localised school / department policy that in addition contains relevant information, procedures and / or processes contextualised to that school / department.
     - *Approved by the IFtL Board of Trustees as a Trust Core Values policy.*
     - *Approved by school / department governance bodies as a relevantly contextualised school / department policy.*

3. School / department policies
   - These are defined independently by schools / departments as appropriate
     - *Approved by school / department governance bodies*

Contents

1 Purpose 4
2 Scope 4
3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns 4
4 Duty of care 5
5 Health & Safety 5
6 Honesty and personal integrity 6
7 Tackling discrimination 7
8 Professional boundaries and relationships 7
9 Confidentiality and data protection 8
10 Physical contact with students 8
11 Behaviour management 9
12 Social contact with students 9
13 Photography, videos and other images/media 9
14 Acceptable use of technology 9
15 Cautions, Charges, Convictions and Court Orders 10
16 Personal Phones and Tablets 10
17 Alcohol and Substance Misuse 10
18 Working one to one with students 11
19 Curriculum 11
20 Dress and appearance 11
21 Gifts and hospitality 12
22 Keeping within the law 12
23 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions 13
24 Agency workers 13
25 Review 14

1 Purpose

1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with the IFtL disciplinary procedure, Teachers' Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations that IFtL (also referred to throughout as 'the Trust' and meaning all constituent schools and departments) has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to the Headteacher of their school or IFtL HR team.

1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Scope

2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.

2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment (see IFtL disciplinary procedure).

3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns

3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.

3.2 All employees should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

3.3 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

3.4 All employees must be aware of low level concerns, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff 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).

Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating children.

3.5 To do this, employees must have fully read and understood IFtL's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

3.6 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

4 Duty of care

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- Always act, and be seen to act, in our students' best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Ensure their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

5 Health & Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by the Trust as published on the IFtL portal (https://iftltrust.sharepoint.com)
- Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy

- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations or instructions and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Trust
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust community or visitors.
- Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

6 Honesty and personal integrity

6.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at our Trust.

6.2 Employees must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by managers or governors.

6.3 Employees uphold public trust in our Trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
- Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Ensure that they maintain impartiality in accordance with the DFE Political Impartiality in schools guidance.

6.4 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. Employees must treat all colleagues with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy at all times.

6.5 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.

7 Tackling discrimination

7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Dignity at Work policy.

7.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times and not display any behaviour that constitutes any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

8 Professional boundaries and relationships

8.1 Employees in our Trust are in a position of trust in relation to our students which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals. It is a specific offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

8.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.

8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.

8.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with the headteacher of the school or IFtL HR team immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.

8.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the Trust we expect that they identify this to their Headteacher or IFtL HR team and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Where an employee has managerial authority over another employee with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the Trust reserves the right to transfer one or both employees to another role in the Trust following appropriate consultation with both employees in order to seek agreement to the transfer.

9 Confidentiality and data protection

9.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.

9.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to Jason Smith, Head of Operations, IFtL.

9.3 We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems as set out in our Data Protection Policy. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Officer, in order (where applicable) for relevant breaches to be reported to the Information Commissioners Office within 72 hours.

9.4 Employees must read and understand our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies including in relation to criminal records information, recruitment and safer recruitment, internet, email and communications, information security, copies of which are available on the IFtL portal (https//iftltrust.sharepoint.com), from all school offices or the IFtL HR team.

10 Physical contact with students

10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student. Employees should ensure that they have read and understood our Behaviour and Relationships Policy and are adhering to the DfE statutory guidance 'Use of Reasonable force 2018'.

10.2 There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to their Headteacher or the IFtL HR team.

10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order. Physical force should never be used

as a sanction and should always be considered reasonable to the presenting risk/need of the pupil.

10.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

11 Behaviour management

11.1 Employees should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to sanction a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is completely unacceptable.

11.2 Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, employees should follow the Trust's behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation with consideration given to the pupils' needs including DEI / SEND and behaviours directly linked with SEND for which pupils cannot be sanctioned.

12 Social contact with students

12.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students in school and for teaching and learning. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to their Headteacher or the IFtL HR team.

12.2 Our Trust is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of our schools / the Trust. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to their Headteacher or the IFtL HR team any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

[Employees should read and understand our Social Media policy.]

13 Photography, videos and other images/media

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should employees use their personal equipment to take images of students at or on behalf of the school or Trust.

14 Acceptable use of technology

Staff should only use ICT systems and resources (email and phone) for all school/ Trust business or only in line with what is allowed.

[Employees should read and understand our ICT policy.]

15 Cautions, Charges, Convictions and Court Orders

15.1 All employees of IFtL must notify the Headteacher/CEO if they are being investigated by the police, are charged with, or convicted of, any criminal offence, or accepts a formal police caution, and should do so as soon as possible. If the Headteacher is the subject of such they must inform the CEO.

15.2 The Trust and its schools acknowledge that an employee charged with an offence is innocent until proven guilty. However, special considerations will apply if the offence is one of those which is on the list of offences relevant to safeguarding or if an employee is imprisoned on remand pending trial.

15.3 Information given to the Trust or its schools will be treated as confidential and stored securely in the same way as other confidential personal information, having regard to the guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service on the length of time for which particular kinds of information should be stored.

15.4 Employees must also notify the Headteacher/CEO if they are subject to a court order or any other conditions which may affect their suitability to work with children or any circumstances which could lead to disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 if they are employed in relevant childcare.

16 Personal Phones and Tablets

16.1 Staff must not use personal electronic communication devices such as mobile phones, smart watches or iPads as cameras in school. Any photographs/video footage must be taken using school equipment. Staff must only save images on school IT hardware/computers.

16.2 Staff cannot have on their person smart watches which feature cameras as well as other devices which feature a camera or record mechanism.

16.3 Staff who are in contact with pupils should not use personal mobile phones in school during their directed/paid hours of employment unless there are exceptional circumstances and they have requested and been given explicit permission to do so by the principal/ headteacher. Outside of these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the school where pupils are not present.

17 Alcohol and Substance Misuse

17.1 Staff are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out their job and to be able to perform their duties safely without any limitations due to the use or after effects of alcohol or drugs. In this policy drug use includes the use of controlled drugs, psychoactive (or mind-altering) substances formerly known as "legal highs", and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

17.2 Alcohol and drug-related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. Therefore the Trust will seek, where appropriate, to treat these problems in a similar way to other health issues. Support may be provided at this point, in order to aid a full recovery, allowing a return to work/effective performance and the full range of duties.

18 Working one to one with students

18.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school / Trust
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand
- Reports to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

19 Curriculum

19.1 Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with students to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. Health and Social Care, PSHE, Drama.

19.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and employees should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

20 Dress and appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice, self-expression, religious and cultural customs. However, adults must maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance at work which promotes a positive and professional image. Clothing and footwear must be safe and clean and take account of health and safety considerations. Adults must ensure they are dressed in ways that are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be religious and culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. This also applies to online

or virtual teaching and any school trips. Adults who dress or appear in a manner that may be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or, where the adult is an employee, allegations of misconduct that may lead to action under our disciplinary procedure.

21 Gifts and hospitality

The Trust has an Anti-bribery/Gifts and Hospitality policy and employees should read and adhere to this

For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for the Trust that exceeds a nominal value of [£15.00] must be declared to Nicky Molloy, IFtL Financial Controller, and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

It is traditional for students and their parents or carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from students and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value of greater that [£15.00] should inform the IFtL Financial Controller who will then decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make the Headteacher and the IFtL Financial Controller aware of any student who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any student or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy.

22 Keeping within the law

22.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

22.2 Employees must ensure that they:

22.2.1 Uphold the law at work

22.2.2 Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the Trust, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:

- submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)

- breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
- sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
- crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.

22.2.3 Write and tell the Headteacher or IFtL HR Team (CEO or IFtL HR Team if you are the Headteacher) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Trust (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or governors will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the Trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.

23 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions

23.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at our Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

23.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the Trust or affect the Trust's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure.

23.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the Trust.

23.4 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

23.5 Staff must not behave in a way outside work that may impact on their suitability to work with children. This includes behaviour which does not directly involve a child/children. Should we become aware of any such incident or behaviour, we may treat the issue as a safeguarding matter and manage it in accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance document. Employees should be aware that any behaviour that we consider may impact on an employee's suitability to work with children will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure and may lead to a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Teaching Regulation Agency (where appropriate).

23.6 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the Trust.

24 Agency workers

24.1 We will investigate allegations made against agency workers with the cooperation of the agency. Whilst we may decide to cease using the services of an agency worker, this will not prevent us from investigating allegations and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. We expect agency workers

and agencies to cooperate with our investigations and with external agencies where applicable.

24.2 We will discuss with the agency whether it may be appropriate for them to consider suspending an agency worker, or whether we are prepared to redeploy an agency worker during an investigation.

25 Review

This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended annually by the Trust. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.