



# Code of Conduct Policy

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## Introduction

This code of conduct will help you understand how you're required to behave to promote and preserve the reputation of The White Horse Federation (TWHF).

It is important that all colleagues conduct their work with dignity, respect, integrity and professionalism in the way they behave.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) sets out the requirement for all schools to have a staff code of conduct, sometimes referred to as a staff behaviour policy. This code of conduct should be followed by all staff (including visiting staff), volunteers and governors.

The White Horse Federation is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. It is our willingness to work in a safe manner and challenge inappropriate behaviour that underpins this commitment. Everyone is expected to adhere to this 'Code of Conduct' and the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings'.

Everyone must also read and understand part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021). This code of conduct aims to support adults so they don't work in a manner which might lead to an allegation against them by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe, unprofessional and unwise behaviour and by supporting staff and volunteers to understand what safe, professional conduct is. Equally it aims to reduce the opportunity for any adult intent on grooming or harming a young person. The policy aims to reduce the risk of incidents or misunderstandings occurring by developing and setting out clear guidelines and boundaries. It encourages you to work in an open and transparent way that should avoid someone questioning your motives, intentions or suitability to work with young people.

It is a key principle of this code of conduct that **everyone** understands their responsibility to share **without delay** any concerns they may have about a child's welfare or an adult's behaviour towards a young person in line with your school's Safeguarding Policy.

In addition, **everyone** has a responsibility to escalate their concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer if they feel that safeguarding concerns they have raised about a child or adult working at the school are not being addressed by the school or the Federation.

In addition, The White Horse Federation sets out promises and values in 'The Little Green Book' that guide all colleagues in how to conduct themselves at work, and provides the strong foundation for how we deliver the values-based education for which we pride ourselves.

## Our Values Vision

The White Horse Federation is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) of Primary, Secondary and Special Schools that grew from a passion to be collaborative in providing a first-class education to a wide range of children so that each one could more fully understand what they were capable of, what talents they had and to strive for excellence in themselves in order to succeed in the next phase of their education and in the world of work.

The holistic approach we take to all aspects of The Trust's work is underpinned by the shared moral compass of the members and directors and the commitment of all colleagues to do what is right for the children and young people that we have the privilege to educate and learn alongside. This is coupled with a strong duty of care to ensure their wellbeing and self-esteem as learners and citizens, is nurtured and supported. We have a drive and expectation that colleagues will achieve excellence in every aspect of their work and act with integrity both within The Trust and as ambassadors for The Trust in any professional context.

The White Horse Federation is committed to maintaining the unique nature of all of the schools within the Trust and believes this is best achieved by giving a clear mandate to Local Governing Bodies to be the drivers of school improvement. The Trust gives these governing bodies the freedoms to focus on the challenge and support for the improvements in teaching and learning and the curriculum by ensuring the synergies of belonging to a Trust allow statutory obligations to be dealt with centrally.

## **Values**

At the White Horse Federation, we understand that every colleague is here for the best interest of the children. We want to ensure that no child is left behind and that the unique identity of each school is protected, celebrated and valued for the contribution it makes to ensuring children have the best education and experiences.

By being part of The White Horse Federation we passionately believe that by working together, the children are able to have a higher quality of education and that as colleagues, we will also benefit from and reap the rewards of a values based organisation where you are also, not left behind.

The White Horse Federation holds the following eight promises as the foundation for the values of The Trust

- We will all talk straight and ensure information is communicated effectively.
- We will be clear about everything we do, right wrongs and show loyalty
- We will take responsibility for our part in the success of TWHF by respecting and understanding the vision and values and knowing how we have made a difference.
- We will make sure everyone feels included in the decision making of our organisation and is accountable for their actions and contribution
- We will listen to all members of our TWHF community, keep our promises and earn each other's trust.
- We will have a relentless focus on being the best that we can be and in all that we do.
- We understand that we are all learners and that continuous learning helps us all grow as individuals and strengthens our organisation.
- We will work together collaboratively at all times to solve our problems, address our issues, improve our communications, share our ideas and develop a culture of learning within TWHF.

Our Little Green Book is a set of promises that as colleagues, we make to each other and to our organisation, for the ultimate benefit of the children and families that our schools serve.

You will have a copy of our Little Green Book in your Starter Pack, please read it and familiarize yourself with how we work at The White Horse Federation, and how we turn our promises into values.

## Values-based Education

Values-based Education is an approach to teaching that works with values. It creates a strong learning environment that enhances academic attainment, and develops students' social and relationship skills that last throughout their lives. Values are principles that drive behaviour. They influence our actions and attitudes, and become our framework for living. They influence our relationship with ourselves and others.

The wide range of positive human values encouraged in schools include patience, respect, fairness, tolerance, respect, compassion and collaboration.

The positive learning environment is achieved through the positive values modelled by staff throughout the school. It quickly liberates teachers and students from the stress of confrontational relationships, which frees up substantial teaching and learning time.

It also provides social capacity to students, equipping them with social and relationship skills, intelligences and attitudes to succeed at school and throughout their lives.

All schools in The White Horse Federation are committed to a values-based approach.

## Code of Conduct

The White Horse Federation will create a culture of openness, transparency, trust and support where all members of the school community feel empowered to share relevant information about themselves or someone else.

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

If you have any concerns that a child is being harmed, abused or neglected you **must share your concerns immediately** both verbally and in writing with the School's or Central Team's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the Leadership Team. Always listen carefully to the child and report what they tell you in the child's own words. Never promise to keep a secret in line with your school's Safeguarding Policy.

If you receive an allegation against an adult working in the School or observe behaviour that concerns you, you must discuss your concerns without delay with the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns regarding the Principal should be directed to the Director for People or Local Authority Designated Officer

Anyone (in emergencies or if they are required to) can make a referral about their concerns for a child directly to Children's Services.

## **You should:**

- Follow the Federation's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and in line with this share safeguarding information appropriately but also act accordingly with sensitive and confidential information.
- Be alert to the indicators of harm and abuse towards a child, including peer to peer abuse.
- Dress appropriately according to your role, ensuring that clothing is compliant with professional standards and is not likely to be viewed as offensive or revealing and that it is absent of any political or other contentious slogans or images.
- Act as an appropriate role model, treating all members of the school community with respect and tolerance.
- If it is not practical for a member of staff to cover a tattoo, then it is imperative that the tattoo is in no way offensive as agreed by the Principal.
- Ensure gifts given or received of any amount are recorded and discussed with your Line Manager.
- Respect others' confidentiality unless sharing information is appropriate to ensuring their welfare.
- Adhere to the School's policies, particularly those related to safeguarding - including child protection, behaviour, attendance, physical intervention, intimate care, anti-bullying, equal opportunities, data protection, health and safety and online safety (acceptable user policy).
- Ensure that you understand your responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations 2017 and Data Protection Act 2018 and be clear that where personal information is recorded electronically, systems and devices are kept secure.
- Report any behaviour or situations which you may feel give rise to a complaint or misunderstanding in respect of your own actions. Also share situations with your Line Manager if you feel your actions might have sat outside this code of conduct.
- Share with your Line Manager or Principal any behaviour of another adult in the School where it gives you cause for concern or breaches this code of conduct or the School's safeguarding policies. Your intervention may allow for their practice to be supported and developed and/or prevent a child from being harmed.
- Be aware that behaviour by yourself, those with whom you have a relationship or association, or others in your personal life (in or out of school or online), may impact on your work with children. Share these concerns and behaviours with your Principal or Line Manager if you feel they breach the School's safeguarding practices.
- Inform the Principal of any cautions, convictions or relevant order accrued during your employment, and/or if you are charged with a criminal offence.
- Understand that if you commit a relevant offence that would appear on your DBS certificate or you become disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006 (those staff covered by the scope of the guidance):  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

then you must inform the Principal. (The Childcare Act 2006 does not cover all settings or even all staff within a setting.)

### **You should never:**

- Act in a way both at work and/or in your personal life that brings yourself, the School, the Federation or the teaching profession into serious disrepute.
- Make, encourage or ignore others, making personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate any member of the school community including ignoring any form of peer to peer abuse. If an employee feels unable to raise their concerns at the time, they should contact their line manager as soon as possible.
- Use your position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, coerce or undermine any member of the school community. This includes shouting in anger and aggressively to punish them rather than raising your voice to be heard or avoid danger.
- Undermine fundamental British values including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance for those with different faiths, beliefs or from different cultures.
- Develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with children and young people, including making sexual remarks or having inappropriate sexual banter. In addition, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it clear that all members of staff are in a position of trust and would therefore be committing a criminal offence to have a sexual relationship with a young person in full time education/below the age of 18, even if that pupil is over the age of consent. For clarity you should never develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils even if they are 18 or over.
- Engage in inappropriate conversations with students or share inappropriate personal information about yourself or others.
- Discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards a child.
- Give personal contact details to pupils or communicate outside of school using social networks, email, text, twitter, etc. or meet a young person out of school unless part of a planned school activity with the knowledge of your Line Manager.
- Have conversations on social networking sites that make reference to children, parents or other colleagues at the school or be derogatory about the school. Never make any statements or post images on social networking sites that might cause someone to question your suitability to act as a role model to young people or bring your own or the school's reputation into serious disrepute. You should never communicate with parents through social network sites and you are strongly advised to declare any existing friendships/relationships to your Line Manager.
- Use personal equipment to photograph children (always use the school's equipment) and ensure any photographs are only stored on the designated secure place on the school's network and not on portable equipment. As outlined in the Video and Digital Image policy, which can be found on your school website or from your IT technician.

- Should not post on the School's website or social media accounts any photographs of children without their or parental/carers consent. (Some children may be put at risk by their whereabouts being made publicly)
- Use your personal mobile phone (or other personal IT equipment) in areas used by children unless in emergencies or under an agreed protocol set out by the Principal.
- Undertake 'one to one' activities out of the sight of others unless it is a planned activity with the knowledge of your Line Manager and in keeping with your own responsibilities. You should not cover windows or door panels but always act in an open and transparent way.
- Transport children unsafely, for example by driving whilst using your mobile phone, consuming alcohol, failing to ensure that seat belts are worn or driving without appropriate insurance. Any trips should be planned and with the knowledge of your line manager. Unforeseen events should be reported to your line manager. It is good practice to have another adult to act as an escort during the journey.
- Have physical contact with young people that might be misconstrued or considered indecent or harmful. Ensure you are always able to give an account of the reasons for physical contact or physical intervention. Where physical contact is required it is good practice for it to be within the sight of others. Any physical contact with a child that was needed to control or restrain a child should always be the minimum required. As outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

All school employees should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under this code of conduct. It aims to help avoid poor working practices that may lead to a person's behaviour being *investigated* and the *consideration* of disciplinary procedures.

If you have any concerns regarding any of the above behaviours, please speak to your line manager and/or Principal.

**Please see below guidance to locate the policies quoted in the Code of Conduct.**

**On your school website:**

- Your school's Safeguarding Policy
- The Little Green Book

**From your IT Technician:**

- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff & Volunteers

**From your local HR contact:**

- Disciplinary Policy

**From the DfE website:**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings
- Teachers' Standards
- National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers