



**COPPULL ST JOHN'S**  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Coppull St John's Code of Conduct Policy

*Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of our  
Lord Jesus Christ*

2 Peter 3:18

**We are a welcoming church school where everyone is valued and encouraged to flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually.**

**We promote a love of learning where individual talents are nurtured; hopes and aspirations can be achieved.**

**Where excitement is evident and enrichment opportunities shape our grace and knowledge.**

**Jesus motivates, inspires and teaches us about living life in all its fullness.**

Date policy adopted by Governors:	Spring 2021
Date of Next Review:	Spring 2024

## **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 our disciplinary policy, Teachers' Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020.

1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations School 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 their headteacher.

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 agency workers and self-employed contractors 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 School outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore conduct outside work including online may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.

## **3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

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

3.3 To do this employees must have fully read and understood our safeguarding policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

3.4 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 pupils' best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Model excellent working relationships at all times showing care for each other.

#### **5 Health & Safety**

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements
- Read and understand the 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 school
- 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 school]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.
- Access relevant up-to-date health and safety training

#### **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 school.

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

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

- Treating children 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 pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Demonstrate grace towards each other
- 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 pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

6.4 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the Christian ethos, values, policies and practices of our school 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 school property and facilities.

## **7 Tackling discrimination**

7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that pupils and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood the School's Equality and Diversity policy / Anti Bullying 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.

## **8 Professional boundaries and relationships**

8.1 Employees in our school are in a position of responsibility in relation to our pupils which means that the relationship between an employee and a pupils not one of equals. It is a specific offence<sup>1</sup> 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 school 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 pupils. Notes should not be taken from pupils.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003

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

8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 school, we expect that they identify this to the Headteacher 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 school reserves the right to transfer one or both employees to another role in the school 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 pupils, colleagues or other matters relating to the school. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a pupil'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 HR or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9.3 We will comply with the requirements of **Data Protection Legislation** (being (i) the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (unless and until the GDPR is no longer directly applicable in the UK) and any national implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998, including the Data Protection Act 2018). Employees are expected to comply with the school'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.

A 'clear desk' policy- including on screen- should be used at all times for those employees working with sensitive information on pupils, their families or staff.

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 from HR.

## **10 Physical contact with pupils**

10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role, after they have received relevant training (e.g. team teach) and in response to the pupil's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the pupil. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a pupil and report to the DSL such an incident immediately after it has happened.

10.2 There may also be occasions where a pupil 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 by always taking place in an open area and never behind a closed door and is always reported to Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with pupils 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 and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

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

Any such occurrences should be reported to DSL and recorded on the schools internal system – CPOMS

## **11 Social contact with pupils**

11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with pupils for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with pupils. If there are any exceptional circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any pupil then they should report this to the DSL.

11.2 The school's employees should not connect with pupils via social media or other communication channels, including via official school social media accounts such as twitter and facebook.

11.3 Our school is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with pupils outside of the school. We

expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the DSL any contact that they have had with a pupil, outside of school, that they are concerned about and that could be misinterpreted by others.

11.4 Employees should read and understand our Social Media policy.

11.5 Any contact with children directly is through the agreed online platform, using Google Classroom – See remote learning policy

## **12 Working one to one with pupils**

12.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one in school with a pupil and this is acceptable provided the measures below are adhered to. 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
- 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 pupil becomes distressed or angry.
- Have a means of communication available (e.g. have their staff email accessible and ready to use)

## **13 Gifts and hospitality**

13.1 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 school that exceeds a nominal value of £15.00 must be declared to Head Teacher 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.

13.2 It is traditional for pupils 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 pupils and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value of greater than £15.00 should inform the Head Teacher, who will then decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make the DSL aware of any pupil who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any pupil or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

Staff should not give gifts to pupils unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with our behaviour policy and must be given publicly.

## **14 Keeping within the law**

14.1 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.

14.2 Employees must ensure that they:

- Uphold the law at work
- Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the school, 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 school.

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

## **15 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions**

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

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

15.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of the school/school.

15.4 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.



15.5 No alcoholic drink is permitted to be consumed at pupil facing events including residentials.

## **16. Breach of code of conduct**

16.1 Any member of School staff who breaches the Code described in this document will be liable to disciplinary action. The nature of action taken in any case will depend on:

- (a) the seriousness and nature of the breach;
- (b) the employee's previous record;
- (c) mitigating circumstances;
- (d) in some cases, the nature of the role.

Some breaches of the Code will be treated as gross misconduct and in such cases dismissal (possibly without notice) may be the appropriate form of disciplinary action.

16.2 It is difficult to define gross misconduct specifically, but basically, it is conduct or behaviour of such a nature that the School is justified in no longer tolerating the continued presence of the employee who commits such an offence. Gross misconduct can include acts committed outside working hours (as long as it has a direct and fundamental impact on the suitability of an employee to work at the School), as well as those committed at work.

16.3 Examples of acts outside of work which could be treated as gross misconduct could include being arrested and charged with being drunk and disorderly and being involved in a fight or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol but equally could be any behaviour commensurate with the acts cited on the list below.

16.4 The sorts of breaches of conduct which are likely to be deemed gross misconduct and lead to dismissal, without warnings having been given, are:

- Unauthorised removal or damage to School property.
- Dishonesty or falsification of records/ expenses/pay claims.
- Theft and/or fraud.
- Fighting/physical violence, including corporal punishment, inappropriate physical contact and child abuse.
- Sexual offences, including improper relationships with children, including those via social media.
- Improperly using one's position for personal gain.
- Drunkenness or drug abuse at work or at work events.
- Endangering the health and safety of staff, pupils or others.
- Unlawful discrimination or harassment.
- Bullying and harassment.
- Negligence causing/with the potential to cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury.

- Conduct prejudicial to the School's interests or which may damage or prejudice the School's reputation or integrity.
- Misuse of the School's property or name.
- Serious breach of confidence (e.g. serious breach of Data Protection, or Computer Security).
- Conduct outside of work which makes the employee unsuitable for their type of work or is calculated or likely to destroy the School's school and confidence in the employee taking into account the nature of the offence, the nature of the work to be done, the extent to which it involves contact with employees, partner agencies and the general public, and the status of the employee

16.5 This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. **Ignorance of the Code of Conduct will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance.**

## **17 Review**

17.1 This Code of Conduct is reviewed and amended every 3 years by the School. The Governors and senior leaders of the school will monitor the application and outcomes of this code of conduct to ensure it is working effectively.