

# St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

## Staff Professional Code of Conduct (2020 – 2023)

*1g child as You have created them.*

*Give me the skills to strengthen their voices, bodies and minds.*

*And nurture their spirituality.*

*Help me to be kind and correct them fairly.*

*May I inspire each child to have goal*

*And aspirations for themselves,*

*So that they can succeed in their life.*

*Let me teach them moral values*

*In order that they love and show respect.*

*May my example to them*

*Bring them closer to You Lord.*

*Amen*

Distributed to staff: August 2020	Review Date: August 2023
Headteacher/Principal Helen White	Chair of Governors Zoe Morgan
Signature -	signature

## Foreword

Thank you for taking the time to read this document carefully. Sometimes, a 'Code of Conduct' can be automatically assumed to be something restrictive, legalistic or even punitive. The reality is that this document provides a framework of expectations which, having been read and understood, give all of us a *clear understanding* of what it means to be a member of staff within our CMAT family of schools. As such, I hope that the document will answer questions you might have, and provide you with confidence in your work. As ever, should you have *any questions whatsoever*, please speak to your line manager.

Neil Lockyer  
Chief Executive Officer

## Context

This Code of Conduct sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all school staff within St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust are expected to observe. Each person within our CMAT – both pupils and staff – is valued as a unique individual made in the image and likeness of God. School employees are role models and are in a unique position of influence and trust, and must therefore adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

Placing Christ at the Centre, the context for this policy is:

- Promoting positive, healthy relationships consistently is central to the ethos of the school, securing staff and pupil well-being, good morale and good pupil progress in learning.
- The Gospel values of truth and justice are reflected in the child's right to an education, and staff members' right to work in a positive environment which recognises and values the contributions they make. Children are entitled to come to school and to learn in order that they can have the opportunity to reach their full potential; the best progress is made when children are happy at school. Pupil well-being is linked to staff well-being.

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 line manager or the headteacher/Principal. It should be noted that the 'Professional Conduct' element of the Teacher Standards is reflected throughout this document.

Employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result

in disciplinary action including dismissal.

## Professional Protocols

1. **Communication:** All our communications, both spoken and written, with and about staff, pupils and their families must be professional and respectful at all times. Letters, emails and other informal communications to parents should reflect the values and standards of our school. For example, using positive rather than negative language so that pupils can learn what we expect of them in any situation; using a calm tone of voice at all times, to explain something to or instruct the pupils, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable; avoiding using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem; speaking respectfully to other adults at all times, even if we disagree with them.

It is important that communication with pupils and parents should be via the school devices and not personal landline/mobile phone numbers or email addresses. Any interaction between pupils or parents outside of school should adhere to the professional standards. When contacting parents, it is critical to ensure that all information shared is factually accurate, appropriate and professionally expressed. Should there be any doubt about any prospective message to parents, SLT should be consulted first. Furthermore, when communication is by email, the email addresses of other parents or pupils must not be visible; this would be a breach of data protection regulations and, in the case of pupils, could lead to safeguarding issues. When dealing with pupils, language should be professional and appropriate at all times. It is **never** acceptable to swear or use any unprofessional language. Similarly, it is not acceptable to break professional confidences\*, to discuss issues relating to the management of the school or the CMAT, or to discuss other colleagues with parents/ pupils. Staff are required to show professional courtesy and respect towards all members of the school community at all times.

*\*NB notwithstanding this point, please see the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy and Allegations Against a Member of Staff Policy regarding the requirement to pass on information as appropriate.*

2. **Staff conduct:** Outside of work staff must not engage in conduct which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school, the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the School and/or Trust has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, including referral to the police.

3. **Disclosure of criminal conviction:** If you receive a reprimand, formal warning, conditional caution, bind-over or conviction for any reason during your employment, or you are arrested or charged with a criminal offence by the Police, you must notify your line manager immediately. The bearing of the offence on your employment in your current post will be fully and objectively considered and, if necessary, an investigation may be carried out. Appropriate action would then

be taken based on the outcome of the investigation. Should you be arrested, there is the expectation that you provide the Police with full details of your role within the Trust and the setting in which you work.

4. **Conduct in meetings:** We ask that staff arrive punctually to briefings and meetings so that a prompt start can be made. Staff should ensure that their mobile phone is switched off or is in silent mode so that interruptions are avoided. Staff should not complete marking, send or receive emails or undertake any other type of work during meeting time as this would compromise your ability to be attentive and engaged in the topic of the meeting. Equally, private conversations should not be held during meetings. As meetings are scheduled within the Directed Time budget, no member of staff should leave before the end of a meeting, unless expressly authorised by the Headteacher beforehand.
5. **Dress code:** Staff dress should be suitable for a professional environment; therefore, staff should be smartly dressed, presenting a positive and professional image of St Peter's at all times. This sets a good example for our pupils and puts staff in a position to enforce school uniform expectations. Members of staff should avoid wearing clothing that is too short/too revealing or likely to cause embarrassment. Staff should be aware that unconventional hairstyles should be avoided, tattoos should not be visible, and facial piercings should not be worn in school. If there is any cultural reason as to why a member of staff may wish to wear a facial piercing, they should speak to the Headteacher who will consider an exemption. Where staff have a practical/manual role then dress should be appropriate to the requirements of the task (for example, teachers working with EYFS/Year 1 classes, those delivering PE, premises staff and others in similar roles). All staff should ensure that they are wearing their ID badge at all times, and challenge staff/visitors to the school who are not wearing a badge to confirm their identity.
6. **Punctuality:** Teaching staff should be in school in line with Directed Time. Non-teaching staff should be in school in accordance with the time stated on their contract. Registration and lessons need to begin and end punctually. Wherever possible, teachers should ensure that they arrive at their classrooms **before** the start of the lesson so that they are at the door to meet and greet the pupils as they arrive. Equally, as appropriate, staff need to ensure they arrive punctually for assemblies, staff briefings and statutory and paid duties.
7. **Absence:** The Trust's expectations are that staff members:  
Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays;  
Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays, where possible;  
Follow their school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury. This includes providing work where appropriate;  
On their return to school following an absence, employees should complete a self –certification / return to work form having had contact with their line manager (usually a meeting for absences over 5 days). A fit note will be required by school on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of an absence.

Staff should refer to the **CES sickness absence policy** for details relating to sickness absence, monitoring and trigger points, and the Trust's **policy on special leave** if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.

8. **Working outside school:** Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that: it does not conflict with the interests of the school; it does not contravene the working time regulations; and/or it does not negatively impact upon an individual's performance

in school.

9. **Honesty and Integrity:** 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. The use of personal loyalty cards whilst making purchases on behalf of schools within the Trust, or the Trust itself is unacceptable.

Staff members should carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual or organisation/business where this might cause a conflict with School or Trust's activities, or where their association with such an individual or organisation/business could lead to their personal profiting from it. Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the Trust Business Services Director. All declarations should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher on the Register of Business Interests form.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act 2010, you should refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing procedure. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. You should tactfully refuse offers of gifts or services from organisations or person who do, or might, provide work or services to the schools within the Trust or the Trust itself. However, if refusal of a small gift e.g. a small box of chocolates or bottle of wine would cause offence or upset the relationship with a client you should consult your manager and where it is felt appropriate the gift can be kept and put in the staffroom or used for a raffle prize.

There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Personal gifts must not be given to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil should be consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

10. **Personal Relationships within the workplace:** If you are involved in appointments you should ensure that those appointments are made only on the basis of merit. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you should not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant, or have a personal relationship with them outside of work.

Similarly, you should not be involved in work-related decisions including discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any employee who is a relative, partner or someone with whom you have a personal relationship. There is an existing requirement for all job applicants to declare any relationship with an employee of the Trust. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action. This also applies to any relationship which develops during the course of employment; such a relationship must be declared *before* any such work-related decisions are entered into.

11. **Staff Welfare and Support:** Staff health and wellbeing is very important to us. Colleagues experiencing difficulties may wish to approach the HR Central Team, or a colleague/Line Manager to access support systems within School. For health related issues a referral to Occupational

Health is sometimes advisable.

12. Staff also have access to welfare counselling; contact details: phone 08081682143, or email [www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk](http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk). **Username:** stthomasaquinas, **password:** employee.

### Safeguarding Protocols


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 mental and physical health and/or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. St Peter's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all its staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At all times staff must act **in the best interests of the child**. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection, or Deputy DSL(s) in their absence. The school DSL/Deputy DSL(s) are Jan Coghlan, PAul Phillips and JAnE Moreton

**Safeguarding documentation:** All staff need to be familiar with the school's safeguarding documents and policies: **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 (part 1 plus Annex A), Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Staff Code of Conduct, The school's Behaviour policy, 'Guidance for the Safer Working Practices for those children and young people in education settings', Allegations against a member of staff, supply teacher or volunteer and Whistleblowing**. Staff will be given copies of the safeguarding documentation and must sign to confirm they have read, understood and will comply with the expectations.

2. **Confidentiality:** Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed in school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter. However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

3. **Positions of Trust:** All school staff are in a position of trust and it is essential that we discharge our responsibilities in a professional manner. Those in a position of trust carry the responsibility of ensuring that they do not abuse their position or put themselves in a situation where allegations of abuse of trust, whether justified or unfounded, could be made. Any incident which could have the potential to be misinterpreted should be recorded in writing and reported to a member of the SLT.

 If contacted by a pupil through an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the

Headteacher immediately.

All staff should be aware that under the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**, it is a crime for an adult aged 18 or over in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a person under the age of 18, even if consensual (see s16-19 Sexual offences Act, 2003) This also includes 'grooming' behaviour, i.e. meeting a child under 16 with the intent to commit a relevant offence, and inappropriate text/email messages or images, and gifts.

If you have any concerns about the conduct or behaviour of a member of staff, supply teacher or volunteer or visitor to the school in relation to risk of or actual harm to a child, you must contact the Headteacher immediately. If your concern is regarding the Headteacher, you should contact the CEO, Neil Lockyer. If you feel unable to raise an issue or believe that your genuine concerns are not being addressed, you should seek free support and advice from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline by calling 0800 0280285 (line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

4. **Registers:** It is the responsibility of the teacher to take the form or class register promptly (within the first 5 minutes) and correctly. If schools use digital systems and there is a technical problem, please send a paper register to the office and report the problem to ICT Support via email. If a pupil is marked present in earlier registers but is missing from your lesson without reason, then an urgent message should be sent to the office.
5. **Safeguarding, SEN/D Information and Medical Information:** All staff must read and act upon safeguarding, SEN/D and medical information, most especially provision maps. It is essential that staff read this information for **all** pupils, (identified by the DSL or SENCO) not just the pupils that they teach. Within our school community, we have some pupils with complex needs and/or serious medical conditions and it is imperative that all members of staff are aware of these pupils/students and that staff follow the advice provided.
6. **Visitors:** Any visitor to school has to sign in and out at reception. A member of staff should always inform the office about a visitor in advance, meet their visitor at reception and escort them back to reception to sign out. At no point should a visitor be in school unsupervised.
7. **Volunteers:** Anyone working as a volunteer in school needs to have completed the relevant paperwork and checks prior to them joining. Volunteers are not allowed to begin their placement until all the necessary paperwork has been completed.
8. **Online safety and Internet use:** Staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If staff have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and set public profiles to private. Caution should be exercised by staff in their use of all social media or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others.

Staff should not attempt to find pupils or parents' social media profiles, nor contact pupils/students or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. Should staff have a relationship with a pupil/parents outside of school due to mutual membership of social groups or family connections, this should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher by completing the 'Connections with pupils outside of work' declaration.

If the school establishes online platforms (e.g. Twitter or Facebook) for sharing information with parents, this can be used by staff in line with school policies. Staff must be mindful of the school's online safety and acceptable use policy at all times, both inside and outside work. A staff member must not use school devices in or out of school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content. St Peter's retains the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should be taken **using school equipment only**, for purposes authorised by the school, e.g. school website or twitter account. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has previously been given. Once the recordings and photographs are uploaded onto the school website and /or the school twitter account the video/images should be deleted.

9. **Political views:** Staff must ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teachings of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, reasonable steps must be taken to offer a balanced presentation.
10. **Mobile phones:** Staff should only use their mobile phone in a staff-only area i.e. staffroom or an office, and not during work time unless there is an emergency. When teaching, staff members' mobile phones should not be visible or used in the lesson. In EYFS settings it is a statutory requirement that phones should be locked away.

### **Health and Safety Protocols**

1. **Responsibility:** As an employee you have responsibility for the health, safety and welfare for yourself and other people. In particular, you are responsible for:
  - Taking care of yourself and anyone who may be affected by your acts and omissions at work;
  - Co-operating with your employer so that they can comply with their legal duties;
  - Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for the purposes of health and safety
  - Only using machinery, equipment, dangerous substances and so on, if you follow the training and instruction provided by your employer.
2. **Compliance:** All staff will make themselves familiar and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and any other health and safety legislation and codes of practice relevant to the work of the school and also the particular area in which they work. They will, so far as reasonably practicable:
  - Be familiar with the schools Health and Safety Policy and all safety arrangements including those for fire, first aid and other emergencies set out by the school;
  - Ensure that health and safety regulations, rules, routines and procedures are being applied effectively;
  - Promote and achieve a positive health and safety culture of high standard in the school.
3. **Lone Working:** There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a pupil. Staff members need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:
  - Never conduct meetings with pupils in remote areas;
  - Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;



- Make sure that a colleague or line manager knows about the meeting;
- Do a risk assessment if lone working is integral part of the role.

4. **Transporting** pupils : When transporting pupils and young people, wherever possible and practicable, at least one adult as well as the driver should be present. In rare circumstances when only one adult is in the car (for example in an emergency) this should be for the minimum time and the pupils should be in the back seat.

If staff use their own car, school should have a copy of their driving license, insurance with business cover and MOT certificate. In the circumstance of a child under the age of 12 or under 135cm tall needing to be taken in a member of staff's car, reference should be made to UK law regarding the use of car seats. Staff must record details of the journey (e.g. purpose, route, time) and ensure that they can be justified if questioned.

5. **Trips and Visits:** All overseas or residential trips and visits will require at least one term's notice. Any non-residential trip which will incur costs will require at least one half-term's notice. Please see the educational visit coordinator, Rachel Pritchett, to discuss all visits in the first instance. No trip or visit should make a profit, but neither should they run at a loss. The Trust's Finance Department should be consulted for advice regarding the financial viability of any trip or visit. Rachel Pritchett, will authorise the visit once the documentation is completed in Evolve. To avoid disappointing pupils, do not tell them that a visit is happening unless it has been authorised.
6. **Property:** The School will make every effort to take reasonable care of any staff property brought onto the premises, but it must be understood that such property, **including a vehicle**, is brought onto the site at the owners' risk.
7. There is no insurance cover for **money or valuables** lost on School premises and, therefore, the utmost care **should** be exercised in this area. Confiscation of pupils' belongings should be for a short period and confiscated items must be kept in a safe place. **Confiscated items are the responsibility of the member of staff concerned.**

### GDPR protocols

**Data Protection:** All staff have an obligation to protect data and sensitive personal information. All staff should be familiar with **the Trust's Data Protection policy** and are expected to comply with GDPR, in addition to all other relevant School Policies.