

**ST JOHN'S SCHOOL  
AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE  
A CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

**Employees Code of Conduct**



## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of having a Code of Conduct is to:

- To make a clear statement about the standards of conduct expected of employees of the St John's School & Sixth Form College, (A Catholic Academy).
- To ensure the highest standards of conduct by identifying St John's School & Sixth Form College, (A Catholic Academy) standards which sit alongside professional codes and guidelines
- Help all employees to act in a way, which upholds St John's School & Sixth Form College, (A Catholic Academy) standards, and at the same time, protect them from criticism, misunderstanding or complaint.
- To help build trust between St John's School & Sixth Form College, (A Catholic Academy) and the people who come into contact with those working for it.

## **2. SCOPE**

2.1 This Code of Conduct applies to:

- All employees of St John's
- All volunteers
- Individuals providing services for the Academy e.g. contractors, agencies, self-employed, and those working for the Academy as part of partnerships with the Academy.

2.2 Disregarding this Code will in certain circumstances result in disciplinary action being taken. This Code of Conduct forms part of the Academy disciplinary rules. A serious breach of the Code will be regarded as gross misconduct. A less serious breach may result in a disciplinary warning.

2.3 All employees/volunteers will be supplied with a copy of this Code, against which their conduct will be measured.

## **3 STANDARDS AND ATTITUDE**

3.1 All employees/volunteers of St John's are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, Governors and fellow employees.

3.2 The attitude of employees/volunteers in dealing with people reflects on St John's so it is important that they are helpful, polite and courteous. People's impression of St John's is strongly influenced by the views of the people who work for it. Whether or not employees are aware of it, the comments they make will be accepted by others. Employees/volunteers therefore, need to consider carefully the affect of what they say.

3.3 All employees/volunteers are expected to report to their manager or supervisor any perceived or anticipated impropriety, breach of procedure or policy of St John's.

3.4 In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety, as public perceptions are very

important. Employees/volunteers should at all times avoid any appearance of improper conduct, which may give rise to suspicion.

- 3.5 There are a number of principles that exemplify the standards that are required. They are set out below. A number of these aspects are dealt with in more detail within this Code.

## **4. THE PRINCIPLES**

### **4.1 Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity**

All employees/volunteers must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

### **4.2 Accountability**

All employees/volunteers must be accountable to St John's for their actions.

### **4.3 Respect for Others**

All employees/volunteers / must;

- Treat others with respect
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person; and
- Treat others professionally.

### **4.4 Stewardship**

All employees/volunteers must;

- Use any of St John's funds entrusted to or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner; and
- Not make personal use of property or facilities of St John's, unless properly authorised to do so.

### **4.5 Personal Interests**

All employees/volunteers must not in their official or personal capacity

- Allow their personal interests to conflict with St John's requirements; or
- Use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person

### **4.6 Declaring Interests**

All employees/volunteers must comply with any of St John's requirements:

- To declare interests; and
- To declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of their

employment.

#### **4.7 Openness**

All employees/volunteers must NOT:

- Disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless they are required by law to do so; and
- Prevent another person from gaining access to information, which law entitles to that person.

#### **4.8 Duty of Trust**

All employees/volunteers must at all times act in accordance with the trust that parents and the public is entitled to place in them.

#### **4.9 Safeguarding**

All employees/volunteers must undertake their work in accordance with requirements laid down (for their job) in support of St John's duties for safeguarding children and young people. (See Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy)

### **5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

5.1 St John's recognises the importance of an open, transparent culture with clear communication and accountability. It is St John's aim to be as open as possible about all its activities. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Different rules apply in different situations. If an employee/volunteer is in any doubt as to whether they can release any particular information, they should always check with the Head Teacher first.

5.2 The confidentiality of information received in the course of an employee's/volunteer's duties should be respected and must never be used for personal or political gain. Employees/volunteers must not knowingly pass information on to others who might use it in such a way. If an employee/volunteers believes that information should be disclosed in the public interest they should follow St John's Confidentiality Reporting Policy/Whistleblowing policy before doing so. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

5.3 Employees/volunteers must not communicate confidential information or documents to others who do not have a legitimate right to know. Furthermore, information which is stored whether on computer systems or manually must only be disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

5.4 Information given in the course of an employee's/volunteer's duties should be accurate and fair and never designed to mislead.

### **6. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING/WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

- 6.1 Employees/volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within St John's. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to St John's. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 6.2 St John's is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment employees, and those associated with St John's, who have serious concerns about any aspect of St John's work are expected to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 6.3 The policy is in addition to St John's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures.

## **7. POLITICAL NEUTRALITY**

Employees/volunteers must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and must at all times perform their duties in an objective manner.

## **8. RELATIONSHIPS**

- 8.1 St John's is firmly committed to equal opportunities and believes that every employee has the right to work in a safe environment without the fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse. St John's will not tolerate or condone harassment or bullying in any form. St John's has adopted Anti-harassment and bullying policy, which addresses these issues in more detail. This policy aims to prohibit harassment and bullying within St John's and covers employees. Copies of the policy are available in school.

### **Appointment of Staff**

- 8.2 It is unlawful for appointments to be made on the basis of anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. Employees involved in making appointments should do everything possible to ensure that these are made on the basis of merit and in accordance with the prevailing St John's policy on Recruitment and Selection and regulations on safer recruitment.
- 8.3 In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not become involved in any appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, if they are a relative of an applicant, or have a close personal relationship with him or her, nor where they have the opportunity to benefit, directly or indirectly, from an appointment without the express prior approval of the Head Teacher.
- 8.4 In this paragraph 'relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, child of a partner, brother, sister grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding person.

- 8.5 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who are involved in a romantic relationship.
- 8.6 'Close personal relationship' would include a person not employed by St John's with whom an employee has a close business connection.
- 8.7 Personal relationships between colleagues who work together can give rise to conflicts of interest. Therefore, employees who have entered into a close personal or romantic relationship with a colleague are required to disclose this fact to the Head Teacher.
- 8.8 This information should only be considered to ensure that the existence of the relationship does not impact on the smooth running of the St John's.

### **The Local Community and Service Users**

- 8.9 Employees/volunteers should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient service delivery to that community in accordance with the policies of St John's. This may involve dealing with troubled, angry and frustrated parents and carers, although employees are entitled not to be expected to place their personal health, safety and welfare at risk.

### **Contractors**

- 8.10 All relationships of a business or personal nature with external contractors or suppliers, or potential contractors or suppliers, must be declared to the Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.11 Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with contracting procedures and rules and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives.

## **9. OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS**

- 9.1 St John's recognises that employees are entitled to their private lives. In general, an employee's choices and action outside of work are not St John's concern. However in order to protect both the employee/volunteer and Academy there are exceptions to this.

## **10. CONDUCT**

- 10.1 Whether in or outside work, employee's/volunteers must not conduct themselves in any way that creates doubt as to their suitability for their post or brings St John's into disrepute. This includes conduct, which would bring into question their suitability to work with children.
- 10.2 All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of parents, the public in general and all those with whom they work.

- 10.3 There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in the workplace or indicate unsuitability to work with children or young people. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.
- 10.4 Adults in contact with children and young people should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
- 10.5 The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and may require careful consideration by the School as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and young people in the workforce.

## **11. ADDITIONAL WORK**

- 11.1 Employees are able to take on work in addition to their existing contract of employment, providing it does not conflict with the performance of their duties in the role for which they are employed. In order to assess whether or not there might be a conflict, employees are required to inform the Head Teacher before taking any outside employment.
- 11.2 St John's will not unreasonably stop employees from undertaking additional employment, but this employment must not, in St John's view, conflict with or be detrimental to its interests, or weaken public confidence in the conduct of its business.
- 11.3 An employee who wishes to take on additional work must ensure that:
- (a) The additional hours worked do not contravene the Working Time Regulations or otherwise give St John's cause for concern about health and safety at work. Details of the Working Time Regulations are available from the School's HR provider.
  - (b) The outside work does not place the employee in a position where their duties and private interests conflict
  - (c) The outside work does not damage, or potentially damage, public confidence in St John's conduct or business.

## **12. BOOKS, TRAINING MATERIALS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

- 12.1 If an employee writes a book for payment on subjects relating to their work for the School they must seek the permission of the School in writing through their Head Teacher.
- 12.2 St John's retains intellectual property rights for work undertaken by employees. Research, reports, designs, drawings, software and other developments or similar work, when created in the course of an employee's normal duties, remain the property of St John's. These should not be removed from St John's premises or passed on to third

parties by any employee acting in a private capacity without the express consent of the Head Teacher.

### **13. PATENTS AND INVENTIONS**

13.1 Any matter, or thing capable of being patented under the Patents Act 1977, made developed or discovered by an employee, either alone or with others, whilst in the performance of their duties should be disclosed to the Academy through the Head Teacher, subject to the provisions of the Patents Act, it will belong to and be the absolute property of St John's.

13.2 Employees must not undertake private or personal work, paid or unpaid, of any description in working hours or on St John's premises unless the Head Teacher has given them specific permission. Where approval is given any payments will be made in accordance with St John's Pay Policy.

### **14. REFUSAL OF A REQUEST TO TAKE ON ADDITIONAL WORK**

14.1 If an employee has their request to take on additional work refused and wishes to challenge this, they should speak to their Head Teacher or consider raising a grievance under St John's grievance procedure.

### **15. COMPUTER USE**

15.1 The School/Academy wants employees/volunteers to use computers to the full and to feel competent and comfortable about doing so. However, it is essential that computers be used appropriately. Any reference to computers should be taken to mean all computer equipment and any associated technology.

### **16. MISUSE OF COMPUTERS**

16.1 The misuse of computers is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary and, where appropriate, legal action being taken.

16.2 Guidance documents exist within St John's, in relation to the use of computers and information technology.

16.3 Private use of St John's facilities, such as computers (including use of the Internet), stationery and fax machines is governed by these documents. Employees/volunteers should not arrange to receive correspondence, telephone calls and fax messages in St John's related to outside work or private interests.

16.4 An employee who is aware or suspects that abuse of computers, email or the Internet is taking place is under a duty to report this immediately under St John's Confidential Reporting/Whistle Blowing Policy.

16.5 St John's will monitor the use of computers etc without notice. A record of any sites accessed by staff is automatically stored on the system and may be examined later if misuse is suspected.

## **17. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

- 17.1 The growing popularity of personal web logs (blogs) and social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace, may raise issues for St John's, particularly where employees choose to write about their work and St John's in which they are employed.
- 17.2 Employees/volunteers should ensure that the content of their blogs/social networking sites does not bring the Academy into disrepute or breach their obligations in relation to confidentiality and appropriate behavior.
- 17.3 Employee's/volunteers should not access personal blogs/social networking sites during working hours. When accessing such sites outside working hours employees are advised not to write about their work or make reference to St John's on external web pages. Where an employee/volunteers chooses to do so he/she should make it clear that the views expressed are his/hers only and do not reflect the views of St John's. In addition employees/volunteers must adhere to the rules below.
- 17.4 Employees/volunteers must not:
- Disclose any information that is confidential to St John's or any third party or disclose personal data of information about any individual/colleague/ student/parent which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act;
  - Disclose any information which is not yet in the public arena;
  - Post illegal material, e.g. material which incites racial hatred;
  - Link their own blogs/personal web pages to St John's website;
  - Include any information, sourced from St John's, which breaches copyright;
  - Make defamatory remarks about St John's colleagues, students and parents;
  - Publish any material or comment that could undermine public confidence in the individual as an employee/volunteer of St John's or in their position of trust within the community; and/or
  - Misrepresent St John's by posting false or inaccurate statements about the work of the Academy.

## **18. PERSONAL INTERESTS**

- 18.1 Employees/volunteers may have a variety of personal interests, which may from time to time impact on their role for St John's. To protect the Academy and the employee/volunteers from any accusations of wrong doing the St John's has in place a number of safeguards which demonstrate that these interests are not allowed to influence the way St John's conducts its business.
- 18.2 Whatever an employee's/volunteer's role within the organisation, they must declare to their Head Teacher any financial or non-financial interests which could bring about

conflict with St John's interests.

- 18.3 If employees/volunteers are in any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, they should bring the matter to the attention of their Head Teacher so that a decision can be made as to how best to proceed.
- 18.4 Employees/volunteers must not make, or become involved with, any official or professional decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.

## **19. GIFTS, HOSPITALITY and SPONSORSHIP**

- 19.1 A potential source of conflict between public and private interests is the offer of gifts, hospitality, sponsorship or benefits in kind to employees/volunteers in connection with their official duties. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence.

## **20. GIFTS GENERALLY**

- 20.1 Casual gifts offered to employees/volunteers by contractors, organisations, firms, parents and carers or individuals such as calendars, diaries, pens, food, drink, flowers and other small gifts need not be declared. The general rule is that a gift below the value of £25 does not need to be declared. However it will not be appropriate to accept a gift below that value if it is more than minimal and may be perceived as an inducement.
- 20.2 In cases where employees/volunteers are given alcoholic beverages as gifts they need to ensure that they do not contravene the Alcohol at Work Policy.
- 20.3 Employees/volunteers should decline any personal gift offered to them, or to a member of their family, with a value of £25 or over by any person or organisation having dealings with St John's.
- 20.4 When a gift needs to be refused, this should be done with tact and courtesy, because the offer of gifts is common custom and practice in the commercial world, particularly at Christmas time. If the gift is simply delivered to St John's, there may be a problem returning it, in which case it should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher.
- 20.5 The Head Teacher will keep a record of all gifts given to employees of the Academy where the value exceeds £25 or when a gift was declined.

## **30. EQUALITY**

- 30.1 All members of the local community, parents and carers, and other St John's employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity. Employees/volunteers should become familiar with and observe all of St John's policies relating to equality issues in addition to the requirements of the law.

## **31. TENDER PROCEDURES**

- 31.1 Employees should exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers,

contractors and subcontracts.

- 31.2 Employees responsible for engaging or supervising contractors and who have previously had, or currently have, a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with a particular contractor, must declare that relationship to their Head Teacher.
- 31.3 If employees become privy to confidential information on tenders or costs relating to external contractors, they must not disclose that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.
- 31.4 All employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current, or recent former, employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in any capacity.

## **32 FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

- 32.1 All employees involved in financial activities and transactions on behalf of St John's, including budgetary control, payments of accounts, payments of salaries and wages, petty cash and orders of works, goods or services must follow St John's Financial Procedures policy.

## Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers (Advice From Durham Safeguarding Team )

### **DO NOT:**

- use your position to gain access to information for your own advantage or another's detriment
- intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine anyone
- engage in any sexual activity (even consensual) with a student under 18 years who is attending your educational establishment
- play games or have physical contact that is inappropriate
- jump to conclusions about people's behaviour without checking facts
- investigate any allegations yourself
- make suggestive remarks or gestures, tell jokes of a sexual nature or engage in inappropriate verbal banter
- create a personal relationship with a student where one does not already exist
- give **any** personal details about yourself or others to a student unless you have agreed this with a senior member of staff
- allow any student to access any of your personal accounts on social networking sites
- rely on your good name to protect you - it may not be enough
- believe that an allegation could not be made against you, it could

**Remember: someone may misinterpret your actions, however well intentioned. Ask yourself are my actions fair, reasonable, warranted, proportionate, measured, safe and applied equally?**

### **DO:**

- report all health & safety issues without delay
- keep students safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm
- look after yourself
- treat **everyone** with respect
- provide a positive example you wish others to follow
- work with another appropriate adult in all planned activities whenever possible
- risk assess all situations when you are working alone with a student and make sure you are seen and/or heard by others
- respect people's right to personal privacy

- create an environment in which people feel comfortable in pointing out attitudes and behaviours they don't like
- report and challenge all inappropriate and/or abusive activities, such as ridicule or bullying
- familiarise yourself with your school code of behaviour
- report any gifts you receive & ensure they are not of significant value or intention
- give gifts to students **only** as part of an agreed reward system
  
- follow procedures for reporting all allegations against staff, carers and volunteers See Appendix 5 of Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures [www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk)

Ratified at Full Governors meeting  
March 18, 2015

To be reviewed March 2017