Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct was approved and adopted by the Xavier Academy Trust in July 2026 and will be reviewed in May 2027

Committee Responsible: HR

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1. Who We Are

"We" are the children, parents, staff and governors in each of our schools, every member of staff in our Central Team, the Teaching School Hub and Teach South East and the Directors on our Trust Board.

While our individual day-to-day operational responsibilities differ, we exist as a whole, bound together by one shared core purpose.

Our Purpose

We believe that each one of us is called by God personally to fulfil their potential; to make a difference and contribute to making our world a better place for all.

Xavier exists because every child, every member within our trust family and ultimately every individual in our world, deserves the opportunity to fulfil their calling and reap the rewards of God's unconditional love.

The opportunities for fulfilment grow greater when we are joined together in our purpose.

Our Mission

To inspire, nurture and fulfil the calling of every person we encounter and the potential of every school we serve, growing together in faith, hope and love.

Everything we do in Catholic education is to help ensure that every child we teach and every person we work with has the opportunity to realise their own calling and become the best version of themselves.

Our aim is to enable potential through the highest-quality provisions to go out into the world and make our unique contribution for the greater good of all God's people here on Earth.

This is particularly important for the children, who are at the start of their journey to fulfil their calling and only get one chance at experiencing high-quality education in school.

Our Values

- ***Contagious Enthusiasm***
- ***Unconditional Love***
- ***Commitment to Excellence***

Given everything that is at stake, we strive for excellence in all that we do. We are constantly seeking to improve our practice and the provision that the children experience to secure opportunities for growth.

Our efforts are strengthened by our commitment to living a life characterised by unconditional love for each other, finding the good in all, and a contagious enthusiasm for our faith.
When we get this right, everyone in the organisation feels known and loved, helping us each to grow in confidence, to achieve better outcomes and reach ultimate fulfilment.

2. Xavier Principles

- As a member of staff in the Trust everything we say and do is guided by our mission. We treat one another as we hope they would treat us and we remember that everyone we meet is made in the image and likeness of God. This document lays out more formally the expectations of all staff who work in the Xavier Catholic Education Trust, but please remember the success of our schools is down to you and is founded upon the excellent relationships that currently exist between us all. We can never take this for granted and are blessed that we work in such caring and supportive environments. This only works because we all pull our weight and work hard to maintain the highest professional standards of conduct in all aspects of our work.

- The Directors and Governors are committed to securing the wellbeing of all members of the Catholic community by creating a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. This code sets out the key principles which govern the way in which we work together; it draws on DfE guidance and a range of school policies.

- This document links to the following policies:
  Equality, Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, etc. It is informed by DfE guidance on 'Screening Searching and Confiscation' (July 2022), 'Use of Reasonable Force' (July 2013), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (Dec 2023) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2024). All staff must also consult the Handbooks of each individual school within the Xavier Catholic Education Trust for specific expectations for their school.

  All members of the Xavier Catholic Education Trust community including students, staff, parents, governors, volunteers, trainees and visitors should:

- Have high expectations of themselves and of others.

- Maintain high personal standards in their attendance and punctuality.

- Treat one another with fairness, dignity and respect at all times.

- Display the characteristics they want others to show including honesty, patience and genuine concern for others.

- Model appropriate behaviour for the children in their care, ensuring they demonstrate actions and use words that they want children to learn and imitate.

- Recognise the achievements of others.

- Respect the boundaries in their relationships with each other and not abuse their position or age by entering into inappropriate relationships; committing such acts against an individual which are illegal, e.g., physical assault, harassment, undermining, bullying or intimidating any other member of the school community.

- Work within set deadlines and arrive on time for meetings, lessons and events.

- Take into account others work pressures and commitments.

- Dress in an appropriate manner as set out in the school's dress/uniform code.

- Ask for support whenever needed.

- Report incidents or actions of others which they feel threaten the welfare and security of any member of the school community.

We rely on all staff:

- Demonstrating professionalism in their dealings with colleagues, students, parents and visitors to the school and treating each with respect.
- Acting as good role models in behaviour, attitude, punctuality and professional dress for the young people in our care.
- Carrying out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, bearing in mind the reliance that we all have on the co-operation and support of others.
- Actively committing to their own professional development and the aspirations of the school
- In the case of teachers, in addition to this code of conduct, committing to meet the standards outlined in the Teachers' Standards published by the Teaching Agency ('Personal and Professional Conduct').
- Meeting the administrative, security (including computer network aspects) and health and safety requirements of the school.
- Ensuring confidentiality about school matters and ensuring that school and student/staff information is shared only with appropriate parties who need to know as part of the school's work.
- Demonstrating a desire and willingness to follow school policies and procedures.
- Promoting fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality as the norm.
- Ensuring that all safeguarding concerns are passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.
- The school expects all employees to comply with lawful written and oral instruction unless to do so would result in a health and safety risk.
- Maintain the professional standards expected of their roles, contributing to the success of the school and Trust and working practices as directed by the Headteacher.
- Ensure that they have read and adhere to the relevant Trust policies located on the website: Appraisal policy; Attendance Management policy: Capability policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding policy (including all supplementary policies); Complaints policy; Data protection policy; Disciplinary policy; Finance (including supplementary finance policies); Grievance policy; Health and Safety policy; Relationship and Sex Education policy; SEND policy; Whistleblowing policy; Pay policy.
- Alert the Headteacher (CEO in the case of the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher or Head of School) at the earliest opportunity if they are aware that they have conducted themselves in a way which may have breached the expected standards of conduct.

- Should a member of staff become aware of any conduct on the part of a colleague which raises concerns regarding health and safety, safeguarding or criminal activity – they have a duty to disclose this.

Failure to follow the Staff Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the Disciplinary policy.

Parents as employees

Staff should not form personal relationships with the parents of any pupils, including on social media. The only exception to this is for parents as employees.

It is acknowledged that some staff also have children who attend the school. It is recognised that in these cases the staff fulfil a dual role of parent and employee.

Parents as employees should ensure that they uphold boundaries between the two roles and that their behaviour does not constitute a conflict of interest. For example, they must maintain the same level of confidentiality despite social expectations. Parent- staff should discuss any inter-role conflict with their line manager.

3. Staff Dress Code

How we dress gives others an impression of how important we feel an occasion is, hence, we dress up for interviews, weddings, etc. Members of staff are asked to dress very smartly as this gives the impression to everyone, we feel working in a school is a really important occasion. It is also important that we maintain the same high standards of dress as we expect from the children.

The staff dress code must also be appropriate for the nature of the role undertaken which will vary depending on the sector of the school, role of the member of staff and occasion, e.g., in the secondary sector, the staff dress code is formal business wear, i.e. suits or tailored dresses with a jacket (no cardigans or cropped trousers). In the primary sector, the dress code is smart professional clothing.

Please ensure you wear formal shoes, i.e., no toes on show or flip flops. Ideally tattoos should be covered and no tattoos that could be considered offensive should be on display. Additional piercings (apart from ear lobes) should not be visible. The exception to this formal wear is on INSET days when staff wear casual clothes unless they are presenting. For greater detail on specific dress codes see your school Handbook. The School recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its staff and will take a sensitive approach where this affects dress requirements.

4. Safeguarding

Further details can be found in the relevant school Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and the Xavier Supplemental Safeguarding Policies.

All staff have a responsibility to:
Safeguard pupils and students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

Promote the welfare of pupils / students and provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

Identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All staff must be aware of the process to follow if they have concerns about a child and report as soon as possible and without delay any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Report any allegations made against a member of staff, supply staff, contractors or a volunteer to the Headteacher. Allegations involving the Head of School, Headteacher or Executive Headteacher should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Xavier Catholic Education Trust or Safeguarding Compliance Director.

Staff should also be aware of the Prevent Duty, online safety, mental health, their legal duty regarding FGM, and other areas that may cause a risk to the safety of a pupil. All Employees must ensure they have read, understood and comply with:

- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024).
- The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The Trust Supplemental Safeguarding Policies (hyperlink).
- The School's Behaviour Management Policy.

Staff must attend and comply with any training as required by the school associated with the safeguarding of pupils / students.

Low Level Concerns

All staff

Report low-level concerns (as defined in KCSIE 2024) about any member of staff/supply staff, volunteer or contractor to the Headteacher. Low-level concerns about the Headteacher should be shared with the Chief Executive Officer or Xavier Safeguarding Compliance Director.

A 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the allegation/harm threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – 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 Xavier Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and does not meet the allegations/harm threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are 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.
- Humiliating children.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher should record 'low-level concerns' in cases which concern a member of staff, supply staff, contractor or a volunteer. The record should include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns should also be noted, if the individual wishes to remain anonymous that will be respected as far as reasonably possible. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified and acted upon.

5. Staff / Pupil Relationships

All staff must observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position and position of trust. They must act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably question the appropriateness of their conduct or behaviour. The relationship between a member of staff and a pupil is not a relationship of equals, staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff must ensure that:

a. This takes place in a public place that others can access.
b. Others can see into the room.
c. A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff are encouraged to take part in school related activities such as trips, fixtures, rehearsals and extracurricular activities, these are an important part of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. However, staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of official school activities and non-school hours.

Staff must not engage in paid duties such as tutoring or babysitting of any child that they teach or support. If a member of staff has a second role involving children attending any Xavier school, they must notify their Headteacher or Safeguarding Compliance Director.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes mobile numbers, social media profiles, gaming sites or other methods of communication.
Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a child seeks to establish social contact staff should exercise professional judgement when responding and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with children and must not engage in any sexual activity with a child.

Staff should be familiar with sections 15A and 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003, regarding communication with children and the abuse of a position of trust.

While it is accepted that many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable (apart from class prizes or general incentives such as fruit or pencils given as part of school activities).

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this must be reported to his/her line manager or the Headteacher.

6. Communication and Social Media

Staff must ensure that their online presence / profile is compatible with their professional role.

Communication between pupils or students and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, tablets, text messages, emails, instant messages, websites, social media such as Facebook.

Twitter, Instagram, chatrooms, forums, blogs, apps such as WhatsApp, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, webcams and other handheld devices.

Staff should not share any personal information with pupils and they should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. They should ensure that all communications are transparent and avoid any communication that could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

Staff must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to pupils or students unless the need to do so is agreed in writing with senior management.

It is recommended that staff ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils or students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils or students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by colleagues, pupils or students, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by Xavier Catholic Education Trust and must not post material which damages the reputation of the school, or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.

Staff who are also parents of children at a school within the Trust, need to take additional care to ensure that their families' social media presence does not compromise their own professional standing in the community, or above guidance. If their children are able to see their social media profiles, care must be taken that this does not extend to their children's friends who are also pupils at the school. Please discuss with your Headteacher if you have concerns about this aspect of the code of conduct.

7. Acceptable Use of Technology

Please see the Safeguarding Supplementary policies for further guidance

Use of Personal Mobile Phones / Devices

Staff are not permitted to make / receive personal calls / texts, send / receive personal emails or access internet / social media during work time where children are present.

Staff should ensure that mobile devices are out of sight (unless being used for work purposes) and silent in the classroom or where children are present. Mobile devices should not be left on display.

Staff should not use their personal equipment (mobile phones / cameras / tablets) to take photos or make recordings of pupils / students.

Monitoring of Usage

Staff must not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene or offensive emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

The Trust and individual schools have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system and all devices are monitored. The schools also filter for keywords and phrases/ images as part of the safeguarding processes. This monitoring will be proportionate and will take place in accordance with data protection / privacy legislation.
The school may address concerns regarding unauthorised, unacceptable or inappropriate use of ICT systems / devices or social media as a disciplinary matter.

Safe Use of Images

Making and using images of pupils will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents/carers. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

For the protection of children, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed, unless specific permission has been sought:

- If the image is used, avoid naming the child, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames).
- If the child is named, avoid using their image.
- Schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long.
- Images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, staff often have access to confidential or sensitive information about pupils /students, their parents/carers, colleagues or the business and operation of the School.

All staff must work in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Such information must never be:

a. disclosed to any person without the relevant authority.
b. Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
c. Used for a purpose other than it was collected and intended for.

Specifically, all staff must:

d. Observe the school's procedures for the release of information to other agencies and members of the public.

Not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain.

e. Refrain from speaking inappropriately about the school community, pupils, parents, staff or governors including discussing incidents, operational or employment matters with parents / members of the public.
f. Ensure all confidential data is kept secure and password protected.

Should staff be in doubt about the appropriateness of sharing information they should seek guidance from the Headteacher.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns. Staff have a statutory obligation to immediately share with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a child. Staff should pass on information immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told.
Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the school.

9. Honesty and Integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils. Handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.
Any member of staff carrying out additional work or consultancy during the school day must, prior to accepting the role, gain permission from the Headteacher, or in the case of a Headteacher, the Xavier Catholic Education Trust CEO. All payments must be paid directly into the school budget.

Staff must not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £35 (excluding class collection gifts) must be declared and recorded onthe gifts and hospitality register.

Staff must ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct. Any changes to their personal circumstances that may impact on their

suitability to work with children must be discussed with their Headteacher or line manager.

10. Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not act in a way that would bring the Xavier Catholic Education Trust, any of its schools, the diocese or the teaching profession into disrepute or affect their suitability to undertake their job role or work with children and young people. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school or school personnel on social media.

11. Smoking and the use of drugs and alcohol.

All Schools within Xavier Catholic Education Trust are non- smoking environments. Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes or "vaping" is not allowed on School premises, inside or within the school grounds at any time including during working time. Staff should also refrain from smoking immediately outside of the school entrances.

Staff must not consume alcohol or use illegal drugs in the workplace or be under the influence of such substances whilst at work. This includes the use of 'legal highs' or psychoactive substances.

The only exception with regard to alcohol consumption is at an organised school social function which has been approved by the Headteacher.

Staff must ensure that any use of alcohol / illegal drugs outside of work does not adversely affect their work performance, attendance, conduct, working relationships, health and safety of themselves and others or damage the Trust's image and reputation. Staff are expected to behave in a manner which would not lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model. For example, presenting for work with clothing or breath smelling of alcohol or drugs is likely to raise reputational concerns.

If a member of staff has a drug or alcohol dependency which is impacting on their work or has the potential to impact on their work, they should discuss this with the Headteacher or HR. Where a member of staff engages with the school regarding addressing their dependency, consideration will be given on how to best to support them. External advice may be sought prior to or during the implementation of the Trust's disciplinary procedure where conduct issues arise due to alcohol or drug use.

12. Equality

All staff; pupils and members of the local community have a right to be treated with fairness and equality. Staff must ensure that they comply at all times with the policies relating to equality issues. Victimisation, bullying and harassment of, or discrimination against other work colleagues, pupils or members of the community could constitute disciplinary proceedings or gross misconduct. All staff are expected to report any concerns or suspicions they may have about the treatment of others to their line manager or the Headteacher.

13. Personal Relationships – Conflict of Interest

The Xavier Catholic Education Trust places the responsibility on the individual member of staff to withdraw from decisions where owing to their personal relationship, there might be either real or perceived conflicts of interest.

a. Wherever possible, line managers should withdraw from exercising managerial / supervisory responsibilities where a close relative/ partner/friend is involved. In all cases involving line management and performance/ pay decisions, close relationships must be declared by the line manager to the Headteacher or in the case of a Headteacher to the CEO.
b. If any member of staff believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/ authority or conflict of interest. They should raise this with their line manager or Headteacher either informally or through a grievance.
c. All staff must ensure that they declare any personal or business interests to the Headteacher that may be perceived to be relevant or in conflict with their school role.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the school, Trust and its pupils.