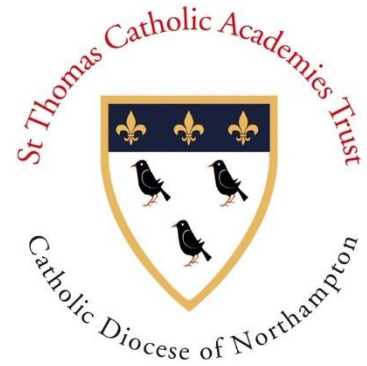


# St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES



- Cardinal Newman Catholic Academy Trust
- St Joseph's Catholic High School
- St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School
- St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
- St Ethelbert's Catholic School
- St Anthony's RC Primary School

### 1. **PURPOSE**

This Code sets out the principles relating to the manner, approach and behaviours that should be observed by all employees of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, in order to ensure conduct of the highest order and that pupils, parents, the community and colleagues have and maintain confidence and Trust in the integrity of those working for each school. This Code has been adopted by the SACAT Board of Directors and each Local Governing Body and uses the framework agreed by the Trust and commended to Schools and forms part of the terms and conditions of service of employment of all employees within the Trust. This Code forms part of the terms and conditions of service of employment for all employees in the school.

### 2. **SCOPE**

- The Code covers the following areas:
  - 3) General Principles
  - 4) Responsibilities of Employees
  - 5) General Standards in Dealing with People
  - 6) Relationships with Pupils, Parents, Directors and Governors
  - 7) Child Protection
  - 8) Prevent
  - 9) Position of Trust
  - 10) Equality of Opportunities for All
  - 11) Conflicts of Interests & Work outside the School
  - 12) Awarding Contracts
  - 13) Hospitality and Acceptance of Gifts
  - 14) Commercial Confidentiality
  - 15) Criminal Offences
  - 16) Driving Disqualifications
  - 17) Use of Trust/school Facilities
  - 18) Dress Code
  - 19) Sanctions for Breach of the Code
  - 20) Car Parking Arrangements
  - 21) Where to Obtain Further Advice

### 3. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The adoption of a Code of Conduct means that the standards and expectations of all Trust employees are transparent and equitable. The Code constitutes part of employees' terms and conditions of employment, and will therefore be monitored and enforced, if necessary through normal procedural arrangements agreed by the Board of Directors and the Local Governing Body. This Code therefore, is designed to set out standards of conduct and behaviour in order that employees themselves and the school community can be sure of the parameters and standards required of employees in such a manner that there will be confidence and Trust in the employee working practices.
- 3.2 This Code identifies those key areas of conduct and behaviour, setting out standards and guidance for employees. It is supported by all employment procedures, protocols and the Staff/Personnel Handbook as adopted by the Trust. The areas highlighted in this Code are not exhaustive, and employees should endeavour to be seen as setting the highest standards of conduct in a way that does not bring any disrepute on themselves as a Trust employee, the service they work within, or the Trust/school in general.
- 3.3 All employees in the school are undertaking a professional role to support the education of young people. As such they are all role models and are expected to act accordingly. This includes relationships and communication with colleagues and the Trust/school, adherence to each school's dress code, appropriate for the job, and activities in the community outside Trust/school.
- 3.4 All employees should ensure that their behaviour and performance meets work place standards at any time that the Trust/school, is being represented or is likely to be identified or associated with the role.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are not placed in a position which risks, or appears to risk, conflict between their private interests and their contractual duties. It is for the employee always to be impartial and honest in the conduct of their official business and with their own dealings with the school, and to notify the Trust/Local Governing Body of any change in their circumstances/interests that may impact in any way upon their employment, within the Trust/school. (Examples of situations may be where the employee recommends a contractor for services without declaring any potential pecuniary interest or where an employee has been involved in some criminal conviction in relation to his/her private life/interests that may have a connection/bearing upon the job he/she does).
- 4.2 Employees are subject to adherence to the Trusts and each school's policies and procedures, the Trusts Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and are expected to use any public funds that are entrusted to them in the best way possible for the school and its community.
- 4.3 Teachers are reminded that they must adhere to the Teachers' Standards (updated June 2013), and these form part of teachers terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.4 It is also the responsibility of the headteacher to monitor, where practical, that employees are conforming to this Code and to ensure that employees are fully aware of its contents.
- 4.5 Employees must also have regard for the Roman Catholic character of each School and not do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same.

#### **5. GENERAL STANDARDS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE**

- 5.1 In the course of carrying out their duties, employees are required and expected to treat all people, with whom they have dealings, in a courteous, polite, unbiased and respectful manner. It is recognised that given certain circumstances, there will be occasions where dialogue may become strained. Employees should then bring the discussion to a close and seek support from the headteacher/colleagues in accordance with the relevant school procedure (e.g. Behaviour Policy, Complaints Procedure). Employees

who are faced with abusive/violent situations are always advised, particularly where there is potential danger to themselves or others, to politely withdraw or disengage themselves from the situation.

- 5.2 Employees are required to maintain a good standard of dialogue and must refrain from using abusive, derogatory, offensive or socially unacceptable language in the course of their duties and dealings with all people, including pupils. In addition, body language that may be construed as aggressive, threatening or offensive must be avoided at all times.
- 5.3 This Code must be read in conjunction with the school's **Disciplinary Procedure** that sets out standards that will be treated as misconduct and liable for action to be taken under that procedure.

## **6 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS, PARENTS AND GOVERNORS**

- 6.1 Employees are required to maintain professional relationships at all time.
- 6.2 All employees within each school have a responsibility:
- For ensuring that the school is a safe environment.
  - to treat pupils, parents Directors and Governors with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a professional position.
  - for the safeguarding of pupils well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
  - to maintain good relationships with pupils.
  - for showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
  - to ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 6.3 All employees are expected to follow the policy and procedures adopted by the Board of Directors/Local Governing Body.
- 6.4 The following school policies particularly apply, and all employees must ensure that they have read and understood them:
- 1) SACAT ICT Acceptable Use, Social Networking & Internet Access
  - 2) Guidance on Physical Intervention
  - 3) SACAT Medicines Policy
- 6.5 Employees with a grievance against a work colleague, or Headteacher, will not seek to influence the outcome by making advance representations to the Board of Directors/Local Governing Body, but will follow the schools **Grievance Procedure**, adopted by the Trust.

## **7 CHILD PROTECTION**

- 7.1 There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:
- To take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised and
  - To take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies, as soon as the issue comes to your attention.
- 7.2 Staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to the headteacher, Designated Child Protection Officer or to the Chair of Directors/Governors if the concern is about the headteacher. Where the concern is about a professional, the procedure employees must follow is the **"Where school employees face allegations of child abuse"**. Failure by workers in the school to report abuse, or suspected abuse, in

accordance with this and other school child protection procedures, constitutes a breach of their 'duty of care'.

- 7.3 The Trust has adopted a **Whistleblowing Policy** which enables workers within school to report concerns that are in the public interest, including those relating to child protection issues, and those workers are protected, in certain circumstances, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

- 7.4 Failure to carry out duties in compliance with arrangements made by the Trust or local governing body will invoke the school's disciplinary procedure.

## **8. PREVENT**

- 8.1 All workers are expected to have due regard for the statutory provision under the Prevent Duty, July 2015. Under the duty, workers must build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling pupils to challenge extremist views.

- 8.2 Workers in the school should report concerns regarding any pupil, or other workers (including Volunteers, visitors) who are demonstrating extremist views and/or behaviours, or are suspected of becoming radicalised. Staff must report their concern, as per the Safeguarding Procedure to the headteacher/Designated Child Protection Officer or to the Chair of Governors, if the concern is about the headteacher. Failure to do so may constitute a breach of the 'duty of care' and the employee may face disciplinary action.

## **9. POSITION OF TRUST**

- 9.1 A relationship of power and Trust exists between all staff and pupils, their families or carers. Employees represent the powers and duties of the school. They are placed in a position of Trust to assist in the delivery of education to pupils who may be vulnerable. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure they do not abuse or appear to abuse that position of Trust in the way they conduct their relationships with service users, their families or carers. Relationships that are thought to be at risk of, or have already extended beyond, what may be considered professional are not acceptable.

- 9.2 The key characteristic of the professional relationship is that the sole objective is meeting the assessed needs of pupils within agreed Trust/school policies that prevail at any given time. At no point must the needs of the employee, unrelated to professional practice, take precedence. Emotional involvement or behaviour that is, or may be seen to be (by a reasonable person), primarily in employee interests, rather than meeting the assessed needs of service users, may be defined as extending beyond the professional role.

- 9.3 Unless there is sound reason to do so, and the action is taken with the express knowledge and approval of the headteacher, and the decision is officially recorded:

- an employee must not make personal arrangements to see service users, pupils, their carers or families outside directed or contracted hours
- an employee must not take service users, their carers or families to their home
- an employee must not give their telephone number or address to service users, their carers or families
- an employee must neither sell nor buy property from service users, their families or carers (the school will identify what this might reasonably include)

- 9.4 Some examples of specific behaviour that will not be allowed and which may lead to disciplinary action include:

- sexual contact
- lending/borrowing money or property
- witnessing wills or acting as a named executor
- arranging extra help for a fee
- giving or receiving gifts

Whether motivated by a desire to support pupils, or less well intentioned or illegal motives, all such behaviour presents a risk to the professional relationship.

9.5 This position of Trust also has consequences for actions and behaviours outside of working hours. Examples could be where an employee working with children:

- engage in activity or associating with individuals or people, whose current or past behaviours could raise doubts or concerns about an employee's own integrity or ability to be in a 'position of Trust' with regard to children this could have a direct consequence on their ability to continue in employment/role as a current relationship with an individual, or is known to associate with individuals, who have convictions for child abuse. The employer may not have raised any concern regarding their activity at work but their out of work relationships would call into question their position of Trust and may be considered as bringing the Trust/school into disrepute.
- has communicated with children, in a manner that could be deemed to be inappropriate.

9.6 It is difficult to give the full list of potential conflict of interest, but the simple test is to ask the question:

"if this issue became public knowledge could it raise questions about my integrity and could it bring the Trust/school into disrepute?"

If the answer is "yes" or "possibly" or "I'm not sure" the employee is obliged to raise it with the headteacher so that this matter can be given further consideration.

## 10. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

10.1 The Trust/school, are committed to ensuring people receive equal treatment in all aspects of service delivery and employment activities. Employees therefore, in all aspects of their work, must ensure that they treat no individual less favourably than any other. Colleague employees, and the general public must be treated with dignity and respect.

10.2 Employees should make sure that they are familiar with the Trusts policy in respect of **Equal Opportunities**, which can be found in the Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, and in relation to the **policy and procedure for Harassment and Bullying for all employees**, these must be read in conjunction with this Code.

10.3 Everyone should make reasonable efforts to develop and maintain appropriate skills in valuing diversity.

## 11. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & WORK OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

11.1 All employees, no matter what level of pay are advised not to engage in outside activities whether paid or unpaid that may conflict with their school work, or be detrimental to it. All employees are advised to seek permission from the headteacher in relation to undertaking such activities, and it will be for the headteacher/Board of Directors/Local Governing Body to determine whether the interest of the school is likely to be harmed.

11.2 It is difficult to give a definitive list of potential conflicts of interest, but the simple test is to ask the question; "If this issue became public knowledge could it raise questions about my integrity and could it bring the school into disrepute?" If so, permission should be sought, if not permission will not be required.

11.3 Where the activity is paid the employee should ensure they notify the Headteacher so that the school can meet its responsibilities regarding the Working Time Directive and Health & Safety and any other legal responsibilities. Once the likely impact has been determined, and if it is detrimental to the Trust/school permission will not be given.

## **12. AWARDING CONTRACTS**

12.1 The Trust wishes to ensure that in awarding contracts, fair and open competition prevails at all times. This means therefore that:-

- No private, public or voluntary organisation or company which may bid for school business should be given any advantage over its competitors, such as advance notice of the school's requirements. This applies to potential contractors, whether or not there is a relationship between them and the school, such as a long running series of contracts.
- Each new contract must be awarded on merit, taking into account the requirements of the school and the ability of the contractor to fulfil them.
- No special favour should be shown to current or former employees or their close relatives, friends or associates, directors or governors in awarding contracts to private or other businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or managerial capacity. Contracts may be awarded to such businesses where they are won in fair and open competition against other tenders or quotations, but scrupulous care must be taken to ensure that the selection process is conducted impartially, and that employees/directors/governors who are known to have a relevant interest play no part in the selection.
- In compliance with the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy the board of Directors/ Local Governing Body will ensure that all invitations to potential contractors to tender for the Trust include a notice warning tenderers of the consequences of engaging in any corrupt practices involving employees of the Trust.

12.2 Employees therefore should ensure that where they believe that there may be a potential conflict of interest in the selection of any contractor, that they should inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors to determine/clarify the level of their involvement in the selection process.

12.3 Employees' attention is also drawn to the issue of influencing, or potentially attempting to influence, the decision as to whether a person who is related, or known to an employee, is offered a contract of employment within the Trust. In the event that a relative applies for a post within the Trust, the applicant must record their relationship as a part of the application form. Likewise, the employee is required to inform the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors in writing of his/her relationship and should ensure that they do not take part in, or attempt to influence in any way, the selection recruitment process. Employees are advised, that where anyone who is "closely" known to them outside of the school, applies for a post within the school, that they should not become involved in any way with the selection process for that particular post.

## **13. HOSPITALITY AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS**

13.1 The Local Government Act 1972 states that an employee shall not under colour of his office or employment accept any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration (i.e. salary/pay).

13.2 The Trust and schools within are not permitted to purchase alcohol and gifts of this kind for speakers/volunteers and such like.

13.3 The following general rules apply and must guide decisions on receipt of gifts and hospitality as an employee of the Trust:

- To accept gifts should be the exception. You may accept small 'thank you' gifts of token value, such as a diary, a coffee mug or bunch of flowers, not over £25 in value. You should notify the Chief Finance Officer/School Business Manager of any gift or hospitality over this value for entry in the Register of Business Interests.
- Always say "no" if you think the giver has an ulterior motive. Be sensitive to the possibility that the giver may think that even small gifts or simple hospitality will elicit a prompter service or preferential treatment.
- Never accept a gift or hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the Trust, seeking employment with the Trust or is in dispute with the Trust, even if you are not directly involved in that service area.
- Where items purchased for the Trust include a 'free gift', such a gift should either be used for Trust business or handed to the School Business Manager to be used for charity raffles.
- If you are in doubt about the acceptability of any gift or offer of hospitality it is your responsibility to consult the Chief Finance Officer, School Business Manager or Headteacher.

13.4 A gauge of what is acceptable in terms of hospitality is whether this Trust would offer a similar level of hospitality in similar circumstances.

- Occasional working lunches with customers, providers or partners are generally acceptable as a way of doing business provided they are not to an unreasonable level or cost.
- Invitations to corporate hospitality events must each be judged on their merit. Provided the general rules have been taken into account, it may be acceptable to join other company/organisation guests at:
  - a. sponsored cultural and sporting events, or other public performances, as a representative of the Trust;
  - b. special events or celebrations.

But, consider the number of these events, and always take into consideration what public perception is likely to be if they knew you were attending.

- Acceptability depends on the appropriateness of the invitations, in terms of the level of hospitality, the frequency and the status of the invited employee. In all such cases the Headteacher must be consulted.
- Paid holidays or concessionary travel rates are not acceptable. Neither are offers of hotel accommodation nor the use of company villas/apartments.
- If you are visiting a company to view equipment that the Trust/School is considering buying, you should ensure that expenses of the trip are paid by the Trust/School. Acceptance of refreshments and/or a working lunch may be acceptable, but care must be taken to ensure that the Trust's/School's purchasing and/or tender procedures are not compromised.
- Acceptance of sponsored hospitality that is built into the official programme of conferences and seminars related to your work are acceptable.
- Offers to speak at corporate dinners and social gatherings, or events organised by, for example, a professional body, where there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Trust must be agreed in advance with a Headteacher. Where your spouse or partner is included in the invitation, and approval has been given for you to attend, it will be acceptable for your spouse or partner to attend as well, but if expenses are incurred, these will be met personally.

- Any invitation you accept should be made to you in your professional/working capacity as a representative of the Trust.

#### **14. COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY/DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018 (GDPR)**

- 14.1 Employees must not make public, without the express agreement of the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors as part of the normal processes of the school, any internal information that they may be aware of as part of their employment with the Trust/school, whether or not this is for personal gain, or the personal or financial gain of others. This is particularly important where it may prejudice the principle of a purchasing or a contracting system based on fair competition. Employees are also bound by the Data Protection Act 2018 in not releasing to a third party, other than for internal purposes as part of normal work requirements, any information held in respect of any employee or person who has dealings with the Trust/school for any reason.

#### **15. CRIMINAL OFFENCES**

- 15.1 In many instances the conviction of an employee for a criminal offence remains a matter between the individual and the Criminal Justice System. In respect of teachers such convictions may be notified to the General Teaching Council which, in turn, may notify the Trust. However certain crimes or the fact that they have been committed by certain employees do have a direct or indirect impact on individuals' employment with the Trust/school which either constitutes a conflict of interest or brings the Trust/school into disrepute or renders continuing employment in the job unlawful.

- 15.2 Examples of crimes that are likely to fall into this category include :

- any crime against the Trust, or a Public Body, e.g. Housing Benefit fraud, damage to the Trust's property, or abuse of, or assault upon any Trust employee (whether or not they are undertaking their duties at the time)
- any crime involving dishonesty/fraud if the employee's post involves responsibilities for budgets/cash/non-cash monies/ assets or where s/he has access to vulnerable people in a lone-working situation or manages contracts
- any crime or spent crime if the employee is working directly with, or has regular unsupervised contact with children or young people under 18 years of age; those with mental impairment or those with a sight, hearing or speech impediment. (Note: disclosing all convictions does not necessarily mean action will be taken against the employee, as it will need to be viewed against the relevance or otherwise for the employee to be considered suitable to continue to undertake the particular job).
- crimes of assault where the employee is working directly with vulnerable clients
- any crime that is deemed to bring the Trust/school/ into disrepute

This list of examples is not exhaustive.

- 15.3 Employees **must** inform the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors as soon as they receive a reprimand, warning, caution or are investigated, or arrested, or charged, or convicted of such crimes (on the next working day) and if arrested, must notify the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors of the development and outcome of the case immediately e.g. on the next working day.
- 15.4 In addition, employees should always notify the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors if there is any doubt as to whether or not they fall into such a category. In certain circumstances, employees should notify their line manager if an immediate family member who resides at the same address is also investigated, arrested, charged or convicted. One example could be where an employee working with children has a current relationship with an individual or is known to associate with individuals who have convictions for child abuse. The employer may not have raised any concern regarding their activity at work but their out



of work relationships would call into question their position of Trust and may be considered as bringing the Trust/school/ into disrepute.

- 15.5 It should be noted that the term “conviction” includes a finding of guilt regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded.
- 15.6 Failure to notify the headteacher/Chair of Directors/Governors of a Police Investigation, arrest, charge or conviction will constitute ground for disciplinary action.
- 15.7 Where it is deemed that there is an adverse impact on their employment, the school’s disciplinary procedure will be invoked. The school is not required to wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.

## **16. DRIVING DISQUALIFICATION**

- 16.1 Employees, or whose job requires a driving licence, **must immediately** inform the headteacher/Chair of Governors if they are disqualified from driving for medical or criminal reasons.
- 16.2 For those employees disqualified from driving on the grounds of medical reasons, reasonable efforts will be made to redesign the job to exclude the requirement to drive (temporarily or indefinitely). Where this means redeployment is to a job on lower remuneration, pay protection will be in accordance with the current policy or conditions of service and the school will make every effort to identify equivalent, alternative responsibilities regarding this.
- 16.3 For those employees disqualified from driving on the grounds of criminal reasons, reasonable efforts will be made to redesign or redeploy the employee role. Where this is possible, but results in a lower paid job, no pay protection will apply.

## **17. USE OF TRUST/SCHOOL FACILITIES**

- 17.1 Facilities that are provided by the Trust/school and used by employees as part of their normal duties, must not be used, or abused by employees for their own private use or gain. This will cover all Trust/school property, for example telephones, computers, vehicles, safety equipment/clothing, tools, fax machines, franking machines, paper etc. School property should not be taken home, or taken away from the normal place of work, unless prior permission has been given by an employee’s immediate supervisor/manager or unless these are acceptable resources to fulfil the contractual requirements of the job at home (for example planning, preparation and marking).
- 17.2 This school anticipates the following resources may be used at home, by the **employee only**:
- Laptop/IPads/Tablets computer
  - Text books
  - Mobile phone
- 17.3 Arrangements do exist, for employees in certain situations and without overly abusing the privilege, to use school telephones to make private calls.

## **18 DRESS CODE**

- 18.1 Following consultation with staff the school has agreed the following dress code as appropriate, in a professional capacity. This takes into account equality legislation.

- 18.2 All staff should wear smart business dress attire taking Health and Safety into consideration and should dress appropriate to their role, unless their role requires them to wear protective/alternative clothing e.g. technicians and members of the site team.
- 18.3 Clothes should represent a positive and professional image and not cause offence to others.
- 18.4 Men should wear a shirt and tie and smart trousers. However, men are not expected to wear a tie when the weather is excessively hot. Jackets are optional for male and female members of staff.

For reasons of presentation and health and safety, staff should avoid the following:

- Cropped tops or any clothing that is too revealing, visible underwear, skirts above mid-thigh, shorts and very tight clothing.
  - Casual T-shirts or any clothing with slogans or unsuitable brand names that may cause offence
  - Trainers & Baseball caps.
  - Sportswear including football shirts, rugby tops and shorts.
  - No jeans (except Site team unless uniform is provided & technicians.)
  - Extremes of fashion are not acceptable in clothes or in hair styles, offensive visible tattoos, make up, visible body piercings (with the exception of ear piercing) etc.
  - Footwear must be appropriate to the role and within health and safety regulations.
  - If there is any doubt about expectations and for more information on dress code, please speak to your school's Headteacher.
- 18.5 For Primary Schools, staff should wear appropriate sportswear and footwear for PE or other sporting activities with pupils. For Secondary Schools, PE staff have their own dress code. See HoD.

The dress code does not apply on non-uniform and INSET days although staff should still dress in a way that does not cause offence to others or place at risk the professional relationship between teacher and pupil.

## **19 SANCTIONS FOR THE BREACH OF THE CODE**

- 19.1 This Code of Conduct forms part of all employee's terms and conditions of appointment. Any breach of this Code therefore will be dealt with under the school's agreed disciplinary procedures, and may, subject to the seriousness of the breach, lead to a dismissal from the school. In cases where the breach is the subject of police investigation, the school will not wait for the Criminal Justice or other legal system to run its course before commencing disciplinary investigations.
- 19.2 Where inappropriate behaviour is by an individual engaged on a contract of services, or employees not subject to a disciplinary procedure e.g. those during their probationary period then their services with the school will be terminated following the probationary procedure.

## **20. CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Staff will adhere to the local arrangements for car parking facilities at each individual Trust location.

## **21. WHERE TO OBTAIN FURTHER ADVICE**

Any queries in respect of this Code should be raised with the line manager/headteacher/Chief Finance and HR Officer/Chair of Directors/Governors.