



Woolwich Polytechnic
School for Boys



Woolwich Polytechnic
School for Girls

PolyMAT

CODE OF CONDUCT

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Policy Statement

The Code of Conduct is a statement of PolyMAT's (the Trust) values and describes both the way it wishes to carry out its business and the standards of conduct it expects from its employees and individuals contracted as workers for the Trust.

The code applies to all individuals operating on behalf of the Trust whether as an employee or working for the Trust in any other capacity.

Policy Context

The Trust aims to be an employer of choice and expects all employees to conduct themselves in a way that reflects its vision and values.

The Trust is committed to raising standards. By abiding by the Code of Conduct and following the Trust vision and values and behaving in a manner that reflects these values, the Trust aims to create a better place for all to work and study.

PolyMAT's Values

These values guide the way we behave whilst at work, they guide the way we work together, how we do our jobs and how we recruit, select and develop our employees.

The Trust expects employees to behave in a manner that is consistent with these values and this is encouraged and reinforced through the Trust's performance management process.

While the code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of employees, the following questions may help employees to decide whether what they are doing (or intend to do) is acceptable:

- Is anyone's life, health or safety endangered by their action?
- Does their action "feel" right? Could they successfully justify their action to their manager, student, colleague or friend?
- Is their action legal, honest and does it comply with Trust policy, statutory requirements and approved practice?
- Does their action appear reasonable? Would they be able to justify it to the local media?
- Would they be compromised if their manager, fellow workers, or friends knew their action?

This code is intended to bring employees' attention to key areas of conduct. However, the code is backed up by more detailed policies on Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Electronic Information and Communications Systems, Social Media, Safeguarding Children. It should also be read in conjunction with the Trust's Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability Policies.

Many of the rules set out below may seem obvious and would apply in any type of employment; for example, the requirement to follow reasonable instructions. Others, however, are related specifically to the nature of our organisation and may only be relevant to particular groups of employees.

By their nature, **these rules are not exhaustive**, but they set out the principles to be observed which, if breached, may lead to disciplinary action. From time to time issues may arise which are not specifically covered within this code, but which may lead to disciplinary action if they are felt to represent unacceptable conduct.

Even though not mentioned in the rules, criminal or statutory offences committed while at work may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal.

The Trust may also be obliged to involve the police. Such offences committed away from work may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure if they are considered relevant to the suitability for the work the person is employed to do. Employees must notify the Trust of any conviction by a court as soon as practicable. Failure to do this may be taken into account in disciplinary proceedings.

If an employee colludes with anyone else in the breaking of any of these rules they may also be liable to disciplinary action.

Rules and Standards of Behaviour

The rules that follow set out examples of standards of behaviour expected of employees. It should be noted that **this list is not exhaustive**.

Breaches of the Employee Code of Conduct will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary procedure.

The disciplinary action to be taken in any individual case will always depend on the particular facts. However, **breach of any rule shown in bold may lead to dismissal or summary dismissal** (dismissal without notice for gross misconduct) dependent on the seriousness of the misconduct.

Health and Safety

Employees should always observe any Trust health and safety rules and guidance.

Employees should never:

- **Breach the Trust health and safety policies**
- **Act in a manner likely to endanger themselves, fellow workers, members of the public, the Trust's property or that of a third party.**
- **Ignore anything that has the potential to cause harm. It should be immediately brought to the attention of the line manager**
- **Misuse any item provided for health and safety purposes**
- **Smoke in enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace. This includes vehicles and the student areas**

Drug, alcohol and substance misuse.

The Trust prohibits the drinking of alcohol by employees, workers, (and contractors) in the workplace or on Trust business other than reasonable drinking of alcohol in connection with approved social functions. The Trust regards drinking to an 'unreasonable level' as any of the following situations:

- In the opinion of management, the individual's performance is impaired.
- In the opinion of management, the individual's behaviour may cause embarrassment, distress or offence to others.
- The individual continues to drink when instructed to stop by a manager.

The Trust will take all reasonable steps to prevent employees (and contractors) carrying out work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit/unsafe to undertake the work as a result of alcohol consumption or substance abuse.

The Trust expressly prohibits the use of any illegal drugs or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user. It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illicit substance. If any such incidents take place on Trust premises, in Trust vehicles or at a Trust related function, they will be regarded as serious, will be investigated by the Trust, and may lead to disciplinary action and potential dismissal and possible reporting to the Police.

No employee or other person under the Trust's control shall, in connection with any work-related activity:

- **Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (except prescribed medication) whilst at work.**
- **Misuse and be under the adverse influence of substances whilst at work**
- **Attempt to sell or give drugs or alcohol to any other employee, student or other person on the Trust premises, or whilst conducting Trust business.**
- **Be in possession of controlled drugs contrary to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (as amended)**
- **Operate machinery under the influence of drugs or alcohol.** (There may be an exception for prescription drugs, provided they do not have an impact on performance whilst operating machinery).
- **Fail to inform line manager if taking Prescription drugs or over the counter medication which may affect the ability to perform duties normally**
- **Drive vehicles whilst on Trust business whilst under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.**
- **Fail to follow instructions in relation to health and safety procedures for use and storage of solvents.**

For further information, please see the Trust's Substance Misuse Policy.

Attendance at work

Employees should attend for work at all agreed times and should obtain authorisation for any absence.

Employees should:

- **Observe any designated hours of work.**
- **Always observe the Trust's requirements on the notification of absence by reason of sickness.** (Outlined in the Trust's Managing Sickness Absence Policy)

- **Never work elsewhere when absent from the Trust without line manager's authorisation.** Examples of absence include sickness, suspension and leave related to work and families.
- Comply with the Trust's leave policies (such as Additional Paid and Unpaid Leave, Annual Leave, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Shared Parental, Parental, Time off for Dependents etc.)
- Never leave work during designated/ agreed working hours without permission.

Professional Conduct

The Trust expects employees to behave in a professional manner at all times; to be honest, act with integrity and give respect and consideration to others and to comply with professional codes of practice.

Employees should always:

- **Be honest**
- **Follow all reasonable and lawful instructions.**
- **Conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring the Trust's name into disrepute.**
- **Act in a manner that is not abusive towards another person, this includes indirect abuse for example where abusive comments are made to others out of the hearing of the target.**
- **Treat everyone with respect and not undermine them, bully or harass them or act towards them in a manner which is discriminatory**
- Adhere to professional requirements to attend relevant training and submit monitoring information in relation to employees and students where relevant
- **Advise their line manager if their professional status has been removed by the professional body or they are subject to any disciplinary investigation and/or disciplinary action by the professional body.**
- **Take reasonable care of students under their supervision and follow the required Trust guidelines**
- Comply with all relevant statutory provisions.
- Cooperate with management in complying with the Trust's policies and procedures
- Comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of student achievement and attainment.
- Comply with the Codes of Conduct of professional bodies to which they may belong
- Not bring members of family, dependants or other visitors onto Trust premises whilst conducting normal working duties without prior permission

And must not:

- **Post, distribute or display inappropriate literature at any of the Trust's premises or other premises whilst on Trust business.**
- **Behave in a violent manner or threaten violence towards another person**
- **Make false allegations against another person or the Trust**
- **Behave in an insubordinate or inappropriate manner**
- **Behave in a persistent careless and/or negligent manner.**
- **Behave in a manner that is likely to disrupt working relationships.**

Safeguarding Children

All employees, workers, learners and volunteers and anyone operating on behalf of the Trust or visiting the Trust have the right to feel safe at Trust or while carrying out activities in relation to the Trust. No one should be hurt or abuse anyone in anyway.

Employees must always:

- **Respect other people's right to safety**
- **Not hurt or abuse others; and not threaten to hurt or abuse them.**
- **Comply with the Trust pre and post-employment vetting procedures,**
- **Advise their manager if they are under investigation by the Police or other authority in connection with allegations of abuse**
- **Advise the nominated officer if you are aware or have any suspicions that anyone is abusing another person**
- **Comply with Trust procedure on Safeguarding Children**

Relationships with Pupils/Students

Employees must:

- **Maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably**
- **Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent**
- **Think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised**
- **Be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003**

Employees must not:

- **Establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued**
- **Develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student**
- **Make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context**

Contact with students should be through the Trust's authorised mechanisms such as the school email addresses. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Head Teachers immediately.

Employees must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of the Trust on any social media platform. Employees should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of students or their parents.

Communication and Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in accordance with statutory and Trust regulations and procedures

Employees should:

- **Always comply with the Trust's Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies and procedures with regard to the retention, disposal security and disclosure of personal data.**
- **Never search confidential files to which access has not been granted**

Regulatory issues and Use and Security of Resources

Employees are expected to act with honesty and integrity to safeguard the stewardship of resources for which the Trust is responsible. Employees should always comply with regulations that are applicable to the Trust and its business

Employees should always:

- **Ensure that they comply with the rules and principles of any regulatory bodies and/or relevant statute applicable to the duties they perform.**
- **Comply with the Trust's financial regulations**
- **Comply with the Trust's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies and Guidelines.**
- **Ensure that they account promptly and accurately for all monies handled in the performance of their duties. If an employee discovers any discrepancy or loss they must declare it to their line manager without delay.**

- Note: Any attempt to conceal any discrepancy will only heighten the suspicion of dishonesty later. The Trust may report any such losses and thefts to the Police.
- **Declare any conviction for a criminal offence or caution in relation to an offence** (except those which are “protected” as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013).

Employees should:

- **Never wilfully damage or abuse the property of students, fellow workers or the Trust, or the property of outside agencies whilst conducting Trust business.**
- **Never access, view or distribute material of a pornographic nature**
- **Never make a financial claim in connection with work or services that have not been undertaken in connection with authorised Trust business**
- **Never remove any Trust property from the Trust’s premises unless approved by your manager.**
- **Never remove, or be in unauthorised possession of, any property or facilities belonging to the Trust or to any employee, student or visitor to the Trust.**
- Always use Trust systems (e.g. computers, internet) in accordance with the Trust’s Information and Communications Systems and the Social Media Policy.
- **Take all reasonable measures to ensure, so far as it is practical, the safety and security of Trust property, including premises, vehicles, equipment and cash.**

Equality and Diversity

The Trust seeks to achieve an environment in which all are included and in which discrimination is not tolerated. The Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity and establish a culture where diversity is valued.

Employees should always:

- **Observe the Trust’s Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

Gaining Employment/Promotion/Transfer

Employees or potential employees must comply with the Trust’s recruitment and Selection procedures

When applying for a job / transfer / promotion employees should not:

- **Make false statements to the Trust or withhold relevant information.** Any breach could result in disciplinary which may be taken against an employee at any time and also the removal of the offer of employment.
- **Fail to comply with Trust’s recruitment and selection policies and procedures**

Employment of family

The Trust does not believe it is good practice, either for the individuals or the Trust, for close relatives to be employed in the same Department, particularly where one reports to the other.

Relationships covered by the term 'relative' include immediate family, i.e. spouse, partner, civil partner, parents, children, siblings, in laws, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews.

It is possible for relatives to be appointed within the same Department, but this should be discussed fully with the Trust before action, and should only be in cases where there will be no direct working relationship between the individuals.

Employees should not:

- Be involved in the selection process where they are related in any way to an applicant or have a personal relationship outside work with them.
- Be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, pay or adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner or close friend.

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest should be avoided at all times. Any issues of conflict or potential conflict should be raised with the line manager at the first possible opportunity.

Employees should:

- **Act in the best interests of the Trust at all times.**
- **Not work for other employers while employed by the Trust if there is any possibility of a conflict of interest.**

Examples of a personal interest that should be declared are:

- A directorship, a large shareholding, promise of future employment or the employment of a close relative or friend in a position of influence in an organisation which may compete or do business with the Trust.
- Receipt of compensation (except remuneration from the Trust) for services provided to any person or organisation on behalf of the Trust.
- Outside activities that adversely affect job performance, either through excessive demands on working time or through conflicting commitments.
- Activities that involve the unauthorised use of the Trust's time, equipment or information which could adversely affect the Trust's reputation or relations with others or could otherwise conflict with the interests of the Trust.

Gifts, entertainment and hospitality

Employees should always act with integrity and not allow themselves to be put into a situation which does not allow them to act with honesty and integrity and/ or in the best interest of the Trust

Employees should not:

- **Allow themselves to be influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting gifts or hospitality as detailed in the Financial Regulations.**

For further information, please see the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Reporting misconduct

Employees are expected to:

- Report violations or suspected violations of law or the standards set out in this Code of Conduct. In these situations you should contact your line manager.
- Comply with the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy in the event of concerns or evidence of malpractice in connection with the Trust.

Note: Any information provided by employees will be kept confidential in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy, unless otherwise required by law and may be made without concern of retribution.

- Report all/any suspicions of fraud or theft to their line manager.

Further Guidance

Employees requiring further clarification on this document should contact the Business Manager.