**Staff Code of Conduct**

*Approved by the Board, 24/09/2020, due for review 24/09/2023*

## **Purpose and Scope**

This policy sets out what we expect from our staff in relation to their behaviour and conduct. It applies to all current employees, whether full or part-time, temporary or fixed-term.

It also applies to all sessional workers and volunteers.

**The New Cross Gate Trust (The Trust):**

**Our charitable objectives, mission, vision and values**

The purpose of The Trust is to benefit people who live in the local area and to deliver our charitable objectives, working with local people and partners to:

* Improve employment opportunities, promote training and development
* Improve health and promote healthy lifestyle choices
* Reduce crime and improve community safety
* Raise educational achievement and promote quality childcare
* Promote good quality housing and enhance the physical environment
* Be part of a strong voice for the local community, supporting community empowerment and building social capital, while demonstrating effective partnership working and open and robust governance.

**Our vision is that the local community of New Cross Gate should be able to live happy, healthy, stable and fulfilled lives**

**Our mission is to support local people to: learn new skills; improve health and wellbeing; build social networks; improve employment prospects; develop self confidence; feel safe and supported to access relevant services according to individual needs.**

We work to achieve this mission through the provision of a diverse range of community services.We are continually looking at how we can better meet the needs of our community and all staff are encouraged to share their ideas of how we can better achieve our mission.

**Our values are that we will:**

* **Show compassion and commitment towards meeting the needs of our local community**
* **Respect, encourage and empower everyone as individuals, respecting the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do**
* **Embrace creativity and good-humour, with a commitment to excellent quality in the delivery of our services.**

Our permanent and sessional staff and volunteers all play a vital part in helping us achieve these objectives and we expect you to demonstrate our values in the way in which you behave and interact with fellow staff, volunteers and beneficiaries at all times.

## **Employee commitment**

As a Trust employee you will be expected to work to deliver the objectives of The Trust and to work to the highest ethical and professional standards to ensure public confidence in your role as a Trust employee. You will need to have a strong commitment to high standards of service delivery through your own work, and also through the work of others. At all times you will work to maintain the reputation of The Trust and our commitment to improve the life chances and the environment for local people.

You are required to not conduct yourself in such a way as to create a risk of The Trust being brought into disrepute with the public. Staff are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. Staff must be accountable to The Trust for their actions. All members of staff are required to: treat other people with respect; not discriminate against any person; and conduct themselves professionally.

You are required to inform The Trust in writing of any private interests of yours which may prejudice the performance by you of your duties. If required by The Trust you shall divest yourself of any such private interests.

**Duty of trust**

All staff must act in accordance with the standards of conduct and probity that the community and The Trust’s partners should be able reasonably to expect.

**Personal interests**

In either an official or personal capacity, staff may not:-

* allow personal interests to conflict with The Trust’s interests or requirements; or
* use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage.

**Registration of interests**

Staff must comply with any requirements of The Trust to declare:

* financial or other potentially advantageous interests; and
* hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of employment.

**External Appointments**

Applications for an external appointment should, in the first instance, be discussed with your line manager, whose prior written approval is required but will not be unreasonably withheld. You must declare immediately any outside employment (paid or unpaid) together with any trusteeships or directorships, which you hold, and The Trust reserves the right to see published or private accounts relating to external appointments. The Trust further reserves the right to require your resignation from any such employment or office if, in The Trust's opinion, such activities create actual or potential conflicts of interests with The Trust's business.

**Changes in Personal Circumstances**

In the event of any changes to personal circumstances, you are advised to inform your line manager, in writing, as soon as possible. In particular any change of name, address, and telephone numbers must be provided as soon as these are confirmed.

**Disclosure**

If at any time you are or become the subject of a judicial judgement against you, you must disclose the fact to your line manager, in writing.

**Stewardship**

Staff must use any and all resources entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and must not make personal use of property or facilities of The Trust unless properly authorised to do so.

**Expenses**

You may, from time to time, incur expenses in the course of your duties. These will normally be reimbursed to you on production of a valid receipt. The Trust may refuse to reimburse those expenses which it deems to be excessive or unreasonable, and it will not be able to reimburse any expenses where you have not retained proof of expenditure.

**Telephone Calls**

The Trust’s telephones are for use of employees in connection with The Trust’s business. Whilst the essential personal telephone calls concerning an employee’s domestic arrangements will be permissible, excessive use of the telephone for personal calls will not. Should it be felt that you are making or receiving excessive personal calls you may be subject to disciplinary action. Management reserves the right to withdraw the personal use of The Trust’s telephones by employees if it reasonably believes that the arrangement is being abused.

**Gifts**

The offering and taking of gifts, potential bribes or inducements by The Trust staff is expressly proscribed. By way of guidance, invitations to social, cultural or sporting events from an established contact are usually acceptable. Events involving overseas travel or the provision of paid accommodation are unacceptable. All gifts should be recorded. Staff should not personally borrow money from or lend money to those associated or in partnership with The Trust’s activities.

**Appearance of staff**

Members of staff are expected to present themselves in a well-kept and professional manner to promote good public perception and confidence. Members of staff should not wear or display items which are likely to cause offence or alienation to those The Trust seeks to serve.

**Courtesy and punctuality**

Courtesy and punctuality towards The Trust stakeholders at all times is important to The Trust’s image and reputation. Courtesy to one another also creates a pleasant environment in which to work. We all should maintain courtesy in personal contact, by telephone and by letter, and be punctual in our attendance at meetings and in response to correspondence. If you are running late for the expected start of your working day you are expected to make a phone call to advise your line manager of this fact.

**Your working environment**

You are expected to keep your own area of work tidy at all times, including keeping the floor area free of trip and other hazards. You are reminded that you are responsible for the safety of those you work with and how your actions might affect them.

**Personal Belongings**

Please ensure that all personal belongings are kept on your person or are locked away safely. The Trust cannot accept liability for the loss of any personal possessions left unattended on The Trust’s premises. Under no circumstances should cash or other valuables be left in your desk drawers.

**Openness**

Staff members must not disclose information given in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which is believed to be of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless required by law so to do; Staff members must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

**Reporting misconduct**

Staff members must not treat another employee of The Trust less favourably than other employees by reason that the other employee has done, intends to do, or is suspected of doing anything under or by reference to any procedure The Trust has for reporting misconduct. However, all staff have a responsibility to report misconduct either to their line manager, or if this is not possible, to the Chair of The Trust.

**Whistleblowing**

It is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by staff or others working on behalf of the charity is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore require all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the charity or the way in which the organisation is run. The whistleblowing policy sets out the policy in more detail, the procedure for doing so and how any concerns will be dealt with.

**Access to Personal Information**

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2016), you are entitled to have reasonable access to relevant personal data held by The Trust, both electronic and hard copy data. Any such request should be made to your line manager, in writing. Further information is available in our GDPR policy.

**Press Communications**

All communications and enquiries from the press should be referred to your line manager. No member of staff may act as spokesperson or make statements to the media on behalf of The Trust without explicit permission from their line manager.

**Use of The Trust’s computer systems and premises**

The Trust reserves the right to monitor and record: -

(a) any incoming or outgoing communications to or from you that involves the use of The Trust resources or time.

(b) your use of The Trust’s computer systems and/or premises.

Examples of what may be monitored and recorded include letters, faxes, telephones, email, use of the Internet. This list is not exhaustive.

**Social media**Personal use of social media should not be undertaken within working hours. Outside of working hours, personal use of social media should not bring the reputation of The Trust into disrepute. Likewise, business use of social media should be undertaken with great care so as to not bring The Trust’s reputation into disrepute.

**Environmental conscientiousness**

The Trust aims to raise consciousness about environmental issues among staff and users of The Trust’s premises and encourages all employees to minimise waste, e.g., by turning off all electrical equipment when not in use, printing double sided and single colour, etc.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

In general, the consumption of alcohol on The Trust’s premises is forbidden except during planned events. If you are found to be incapacitated during working hours due to the effects of alcohol or drugs, you will be subject to disciplinary action. You are not permitted to bring drugs on to The Trust premises, except those prescribed to you by a medical practitioner or those available over the counter at the chemist. The Trust will, as far as possible, adopt a sympathetic attitude to those undergoing treatment for alcohol or drug dependencies provided these are notified (in confidence) to the relevant manager.

**Smoking**

The Trust operates a no smoking policy which applies to all its employees. Employees are not permitted to take smoking breaks during working time. Any employee wishing to smoke will need to do so in their own time i.e. before or after work or during their lunch time and are asked not to smoke anywhere near the entrance to The Trust’s premises. Smoking on any of The Trust’s premises is prohibited.

**Diversity and Dignity At Work**

The Trust is committed to valuing diversity and seeks to provide all staff with the opportunity for employment, career and personal development on the basis of ability, experience and qualifications without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation or religion.

The Trust will take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect, dignity and free from harassment. The Trust will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by staff or by third parties who do business with The Trust.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with The Trust to ensure that this policy is effective in promoting equal opportunities and preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under The Trust’s disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Breaches of this diversity and dignity at work statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the staff liable to summary dismissal. Staff are reminded that they can be held personally liable for discriminatory acts and may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should notify your line manager of suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with The Trust’s disciplinary procedure. Further information is available in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

**Bullying and harassment**

Bullying is offensive or intimidating behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines or humiliates an employee. Harassment occurs where, on the ground of an employee’s race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marital or civil partnership status or disability, a person engages in unwanted conduct that:

* has the purpose of violating the employee’s dignity at work, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment for the employee; or
* is reasonably considered by the employee to have the effect of violating his or her dignity at work, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment for the employee, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend an employee will always constitute harassment without the need for the employee having to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, for example, touching someone in a sexual way. With other forms of behaviour, it may not always be clear in advance that it will offend a particular employee, for example, office banter and jokes. In these cases, the behaviour will constitute harassment if the conduct continues after the employee has made it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Harassment also occurs where, on the ground of the employee’s rejection of or submission to unwanted conduct of the kind specified above, a person treats the employee less favourably than he or she would treat him or her had he or she not rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct.

This policy applies to verbal and physical actions as well as any other form of communication including electronic communication such as text messages, emails, faxes and any other written communications.

Procedures: All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The Trust will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints of discrimination or harassment. If you believe you are the subject of harassment or discrimination, you should make a formal complaint to your line manager. If you do not wish to speak to your line manager, you should speak to the Chair of The Trust or another trustee. The Trust will seek to resolve the matter sensitively, impartially, effectively and quickly. There will be no detrimental treatment of any employee for making or supporting or assisting a complaint of harassment – even if the complaint is not upheld – provided the complaint was made in good faith.

Please also refer to our policy on Equality and Diversity

**Trade Union Membership**

All employees have a right to join a trade union and to take part in its activities.

**Violence-free, weapons-free workplace**

The Trust believes that all members of staff have a right to work in a violence- and weapons-free environment. It will therefore take the strongest measures against any member of staff, member of the public or other stakeholder who uses or threatens to use violence against the person or property. Action taken by The Trust to prevent violence will include but not be limited to either civil and criminal remedies. In addition, The Trust reserves the right to exclude from its premises and activities any person who threatens or uses violence, abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour towards its staff.

Please also refer to our policies on:

* Equality and diversity
* Child Safeguarding Policy
* Adult Safeguarding Policy
* Volunteering Policy
* Appraisal Policy
* Pay Policy
* Absence from Office Policy
* Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave Policy
* Health and safety (including lone working)
* Disciplinary
* Grievance
* Whistleblowing
* GDPR and data protection

All policies are available on The Trust’s Website or can be requested in hard copy from the Strategy and Partnerships Manager.