



Staff Code of Conduct

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HR Services	Autumn 2014	2.0	Amended as per corporate policy update
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Prosper Learning Trust	January 2020	5.0	General Review and Update

1 **Scope**

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff employed by Prosper Learning Trust or working on their premises. It has been adapted from the Newcastle City Council Staff Code of Conduct for Schools. It sets out the minimum standards that are expected of employees and provides a framework that will help to prevent misunderstandings or criticism.

2 **Roles and Responsibilities**

Local Governing Bodies and Board of Trustees:

Have a general role in ensuring that appropriate standards of conduct are established and maintained. Members of the governing bodies and board of trustees may also be involved in dealing with specific declarations made by employees under the code.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Headteachers and Heads of School:

Are responsible for ensuring that staff are made aware of the Code of Conduct as part of their induction programme. They will also consider declarations made by the employees under the code and will ensure appropriate action is taken to deal with any alleged breaches.

Employees:

All staff employed by Prosper Learning Trust are required to keep to the standards of this code and carry out their duties honestly and fairly. Failure to do so is a serious matter and could result in disciplinary action including dismissal. Staff should therefore read the document carefully and if they have any queries contact either their immediate line manager, Headteacher or Head of School.

3 **General Standards**

All employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to all stakeholders and to carry out their duties honestly and fairly. All members of staff are role models for the pupils who attend Academies within Prosper Learning Trust. It is therefore expected that staff are committed to demonstrating high professional and personal standards.

This policy sets out the way in which all staff should conduct themselves when carrying out professional duties and roles.

All employees must report to the Headteacher/Head of School, anything illegal, improper or a breach of this procedure. If the allegation is against the Headteacher or Head of School employees must report to the CEO, or if the allegation is against the CEO employees must report to the Chair of Trustees. Employees will not be penalised for doing this as long as they act in good faith. This will be recorded, investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

It is not enough for people working for the public to avoid doing wrong. All employees should avoid anything which could give the impression or appearance of doing wrong.

4 **Policy Statement**

Prosper Learning Trust endorses the Seven Principles of Public Life proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life chaired by Lord Nolan. These are:

Selflessness

People who work for the public should take decisions by thinking only of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain any benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

People who work for the public should not put themselves under any financial or other obligation to any outside person or organisation that might influence them in carrying out their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public duties, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, choices should only be made on merit.

Accountability

Those working for the public must answer for their decisions and actions to the public and be open to whatever questioning is appropriate to their job.

Openness

People who work for the public should be as open as possible about and give reasons for decisions and actions they take. They should restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly requires this.

Honesty

Those working for the public have a duty to declare any private interests to do with their public duties. They must resolve any possible conflicts of interest in a way which protects the public interest.

Leadership

People who work for the public should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Local Governing Bodies and Board of Trustees also expect employees to operate in accordance with the codes of conduct provided by their relevant professional body.

5 General Professional Standards of Behaviour

Staff must:

- Model high standards of conduct in order to encourage pupils to do the same including calm responses to confrontation, diffusion techniques, respect, courtesy, empathy and patience
- Act in a fair, reasonable, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders; bullying, swearing or abusive language will not be tolerated
- Take care of pupils under their supervision to ensure their safety and welfare
- Inform the appropriate person if they believe that a colleague is behaving in a way that compromises the safety or well-being of a child
- Respect the rights and opinions of all stakeholders
- Co-operate, liaise and work with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive an excellent educational experience
- Recognise the professional boundaries expected of their behaviour towards pupils (they must not therefore share personal information, become overly familiar or involve pupils in emotional situations where it is not appropriate)
- Not socialise with pupils outside of school - this includes contact on social networking sites
- Not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which could bring themselves or the Trust into disrepute
- Exercise extreme caution when using information technology especially when using social networking sites (any comments made on such sites that are likely to bring the Trust or pupils into disrepute will be deemed unacceptable behavior)
- Not make comments regarding pupils or Trust business on personal social networking accounts and staff who do so may be subject to disciplinary action
- Maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work including the handling and claiming of money as well as the use of Trust property and facilities – School computers should not be used for personal business – eg personal purchases
- Ensure all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner in accordance with relevant procedures and these are strictly adhered to and appropriate confidentiality and security etc. is in operation
- Not smoke on or within sight of Trust property, or when supervising educational visits

- Present a professional image of the Trust through appropriate standards of dress and appearance whilst at work (See Appendix A)

Serious criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and could jeopardise the employee's employment by Prosper Learning Trust.

Members of staff's off-duty time/hours are their own private concern. However, staff must not:

- Put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests seriously conflict
- Do anything which could seriously adversely affect their suitability to carry out their duties, which could damage the reputation or standing of the Trust, or could bring the Trust into disrepute

Staff should:

- Be familiar with job requirements (e.g. proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc.), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job
- Be familiar with communication channels and Trust procedures applicable to both pupils and staff
- Take all reasonable precautions to avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of unprofessional conduct, which could include the spread of malicious rumour. If they are concerned this could happen (or may have already happened) they should report their concerns to their Head of School/Headteacher straight away
- Adopt a positive attitude towards the Trust, the achievement of quality and equality, particularly in communication with the people outside the Trust

Attendance and Punctuality

Staff must:

- Be present on site in sufficient time to commence the set routine of the day
- Sign in and out of their place of work as directed
- Start and finish lessons promptly and teachers should be present at the classroom BEFORE students with the lesson prepared

- Take responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom, as appropriate, and share such responsibility elsewhere on Trust premises
- Attend work unless they are off work due to sickness or for other authorised reasons, and must not come into work if they are adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol etc. (staff not able to arrive at work at their normal start times, because of being delayed, should make every reasonable effort to contact their line manager as soon as possible to notify them of this)
- Notify senior management of sickness absences as soon as possible on the first day of sickness absence, in accordance with the Trust's Sickness Absence Procedure
- If wishing to take authorised leave of absence from work - either paid or unpaid - complete the relevant form for authorisation prior to taking time off work – unless there are exceptional circumstances

There is an expectation for all staff to attend all meetings within their pro-rata contract. Staff must complete a leave of absence form to request missing any scheduled meeting. If staff miss meetings they are expected to make up their contracted time in agreement with their line manager.

Teacher's Standards

In addition, teachers are also required to work in accordance and meet the Teachers' Standards. (These are the standards for use in schools introduced by the government in 2012.) These standards are set out in Appendix F.

Teacher's directed time is the responsibility of each teacher and is a contractual requirement (directed time is pro-rata to the full time equivalence of a teachers post).

The standards in this list are not exhaustive and further information about standards of behaviour are contained in other Trust policies and procedures. This includes: Dignity at Work Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, Social Media Policy, E-Safety Policy.

If staff have any queries regarding this section they must speak to their Head of School/Headteacher.

6 Safeguarding Welfare of Children and Young People

All staff are required to work within the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2018' and any additional guidance provided by the Trust which aims to safeguard children and young people and reduce the risk of staff and other adults being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Staff receiving information about allegations of child abuse should report such information immediately as set out in the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

7 Disclosure of Information/Confidentiality

The law requires that certain types of information must be open to councillors, governors, trustees, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. An employee should always check first with the Data Protection Officer if they are in any doubt as to whether the particular information should be released.

Employees must:

- Not use any information they get in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit (they must not pass information on to others who might use it for their own gain)
- Only give confidential information or documents to those who have a legitimate right to them in accordance with the Prosper Learning Trust Data Protection Policy (which complies with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)
- Maintain the appropriate levels of confidentiality with respect to pupil and staff records and other sensitive matters taking care not to discuss issues of particularly sensitive matters within the school community which could cause distress to staff, pupils or parents
- Not reveal any pupil information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil and for whom it is necessary that they are informed.

All staff are likely to witness actions or see documents and data which need to be kept confidential. Such information must be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedures. Any sensitive information must not be discussed outside of the Trust except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter. All Trust business must be dealt with in an appropriate, professional manner. Breaches of confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees should not make statements directly to the press or other media without first obtaining the approval of the CEO. The CEO will consult with the Chair of Trustees before making statements to the press or other media on major policy issues.

8 Political Neutrality

- Employees must not allow their own political opinions to interfere with their work
- Employees may not display political posters, including election material, in areas of Trust premises which the public has access to. Trade Union Representatives may display trade union/association views on current issues on the appropriate authorised notice boards within their academy.

- Where political views are brought to the attention of pupils within the curriculum or during extracurricular activities they should be in the form of a balanced presentation of opposing views and in accordance with appropriate Trust policies/practices

9 Relationships

With Governors/Trustees : Mutual respect between employees and governors/trustees is essential to good governance. An employee who believes that a governor/trustee has acted improperly towards them may report the matter to the CEO who will take appropriate action.

With the local community and service users: Employees are expected to be polite, efficient, fair and impartial when they provide services to all groups and individuals within the community they serve.

With contractors and suppliers: All relationships of a business or personal nature outside work with external contractors or suppliers must be declared to the CEO at the earliest opportunity. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit and no special favour should be shown to anyone.

A personal relationship covers: your partner (i.e. your spouse, civil partner or anyone whom you live with, in a similar capacity); your parent or parent-in-law; any child, stepchild or sibling of you or your partner; your grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece; and the partners of any of those people.

An employee is deemed to have a 'close association' with someone if the relationship is such that a reasonable member of the public might think the employee would be prepared to favour or disadvantage that person when deciding or influencing a matter which affects them.

10 Recruitment and Other Employment Matters

Employees involved in appointing people to posts should ensure that they follow the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice.

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in any appointment where they are related to or have a close personal relationship outside work with the person applying. Staff shall disclose to the CEO any relationship with any person who they know is an applicant for a post at the Trust.

Employees should not be involved in, or try to influence, decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay for any employee who is a relative or with whom they have a close personal relationship outside work.

11 Commitments Outside Work

All Staff at Prosper Learning Trust may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

The following conditions apply to all employees regarding their commitments outside work:

- Employees must not carry out private work (whether paid or unpaid) relating to the Trust without permission from the CEO
- Teaching staff or support staff graded above N6 must inform the CEO of any additional employment (The CEO and Board of Trustees will not unreasonably prevent staff carrying out other employment)
- Employees must not carry out any work related to a private interest (including taking or making telephone calls) during normal working hours
- An employee must not use the Trust's facilities or equipment or confidential information

12 Personal Interests

Employees must declare to the CEO any financial or non-financial interests that could conflict with the Trust's interests.

Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires employees to make a formal declaration about any contract with the Trust or Local Authority where they have a financial interest, as set out in Annex B. Failure to comply with this is a criminal offence.

Employees must not be involved in decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.

Employees must declare membership of any organisation that is not open to the public, does not have formal membership and has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct. A definition of such an organisation is provided in Annex C.

13 Equality

All members of the local community and employees have a right to be treated fairly and equally. Employees must follow the Prosper Learning Trust Equality Policy and contribute towards the Equality Objectives.

14 Tendering Procedures

Employees involved in the tendering process or dealing with contractors should make sure that they know the separate roles of client and contractor. They should ensure their actions comply with the Prosper Learning Trust finance policies.

Employees must deal fairly and impartially with all customers, suppliers and other contractors and sub-contactors.

Employees who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs relating to contractors must not give that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.

15 Corruption

It is a serious criminal offence under the Bribery Act 2010 for employees to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage or to show favour or disfavour to any person. If an allegation is made it is for the employee to prove that any rewards have not been corruptly gained or given. PROSPER LEARNING TRUST Gift and Hospitality Policy and Anti Fraud and Bribery Policy should be followed in all cases.

16 Use of Financial Resources

Employees involved in financial activities and transactions must follow the Trust's financial regulations and guidance.

They must use public funds in a responsible and legal way, try to make sure that the Trust provides value for money to the local community and avoid legal challenges to the Trust.

17 Gifts and Other Benefits

The offer of gifts or benefits in kind to employees (or their partners or family members) arising from their official duties could cause conflict between their private and public interests.

Any gifts valued above £25, if accepted, must be registered on the Gifts and Hospitality Register and the CEO notified. The CEO will make a decision whether it should be shared, raffled or donated to charity.

Where the token value of the gift is up to a maximum of £25 it may be retained by the member of staff.

18 Hospitality

A modest amount of entertainment is a normal part of public life but it is important not to risk undermining public confidence or allow it to appear that it may improperly influence the way employees carry out their duties.

Employees must refer to the Gifts and Hospitality Policy if offered any hospitality and be particularly careful if they are offered hospitality by someone who wants to do business with or obtain a decision from the Trust. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence. Employees should accept an offer of hospitality

only if they genuinely need to go to an event to receive or give information, represent the Trust in the community or make prior visits to check arrangements, particularly in relation to health and safety (for commercially organised visits, journeys or activities involving pupils).

If hospitality has to be declined, this should be done politely with an explanation about Trust policy.

19 Sponsorship

The above rules relating to gifts and hospitality also apply where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is approached to sponsor an activity. This may be by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily. Employees should be particularly careful when dealing with current or potential contractors.

Any employee who, or whose partner or family member, would directly benefit from sponsorship of an activity by the Trust, must declare this to the CEO, or in the case of the CEO, it must be declared to the Chair of Trustees.

Employees must give impartial advice and avoid any conflict of interest where the Trust gives support in the community through sponsorship, grant aid or financial or other means.

20 Retention and Access to Declarations

All documentation will be kept according to the Document Retention Schedule which complies with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Public access is allowed in situations that can raise particular public concerns (since they relate to financial interests) and the public interest in being able to see that appropriate declarations are made and the extent to which employees have such relationships overrides the need to protect the personal privacy of employees.

Internal access may be needed by Governors/Trustees or the Trust's auditor where declarations relate primarily to the personal interests of employees. This is to maintain a balance between public interest and privacy issues.

21 Relationship With Other Policies and Procedures

- **Disciplinary Procedure:** This procedure should be used to deal with an allegation against a member of staff that they have acted in breach of this Code of Conduct.
- **Safeguarding Policy:** This sets out the Trust's arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
- **Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff, Volunteers and Agency Workers:** This should be followed if it is alleged that a member of staff, volunteer or agency worker has abused a child.

22 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is appropriate in light of recommended best practice and complies with employment law. In the event of any conflict with statute, the legal provisions will have precedence over this policy in all cases.

Local Governing Bodies and the Board of Trustees will monitor their application of this code of conduct, particularly to ensure that their practices comply and are not discriminatory.

Appendix A - Presentation

- All staff will wear the appropriate ID badge(s)
- Clothing will need to reflect the hazardous situations on some sites and be appropriate to working with a variety of pupils, professionals and the public
- Dress will be smart and sensible and in good repair
- **No denim of any colour to be worn**
- Male staff should wear a collared shirt and tie and smart trousers at work and when representing the Trust or their Academy at any professional meeting, but ties should not be worn when there are Health and Safety issues (shirts should be tucked in at all times)
- Female staff should be aware of the appropriateness of all clothing, particularly the neckline of clothing and the length of skirts
- Footwear should be appropriate and safe for walking arounds Trust sites
- Staff taking part in practical learning and sport lessons will wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity
- Jewellery/piercings must be discreet and appropriate to the setting and must not be a health and safety hazard (stud piercings are the preferred option)
- Tattoos must, where possible be appropriately covered (if visible the tattoo must be in no way offensive)
- Hospital ward staff must abide by the NHS policy for clothing, jewellery and hand-hygiene (see hospital staff info file)
- Staff may wear their own choice of clothing on training days and other CPD days if appropriate, but should remember they are ambassadors for the Trust
- Mobile phones must not be used in pupil areas or in front of pupils
- During any professional meetings or training, mobile phones should be out of sight, on silent and only answered in an emergency
- Chewing gum is not permitted on any site

Appendix B - Section 117 of Local Government Act 1972

If an employee becomes aware that they have a direct or indirect financial interest in a contract which the Trust or local authority has entered into or intends to enter into, they must declare this immediately.

An employee must not accept any fee or reward other than their normal salary.

If an employee breaks either of the conditions shown above, they can be prosecuted and fined. The maximum fine is level 4 on the standard scale.

Appendix C - Organisations to Which Rules About Personal Interests Apply

Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting, which:

- Is not open to members of the public who are not members of that group
- Includes an obligation on the part of the member to make a commitment of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society or gathering or meeting
- Includes a commitment of secrecy about the rules, membership or conduct of the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting

Freemasons are considered to come within this definition.

A lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting is not to be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of a generally recognised religion.

Appendix D – Local Government Competition Regulations

The following summarises some of the key principles to be observed:

All staff should:

- Avoid acting in a way which restricts or prevents competition or is likely to have that effect
- Do nothing that would distort or inhibit competition
- Treat outside bidders or contractors equally with the authority's direct service organization e.g. information given to the direct service organisation about the work which is subject to competition must be made available to all bidders

Appendix E – The Bribery Act 2010

Under the Bribery Act 2010, it is an offence for you to:-

- Bribe another person
- Be bribed
- Bribe a foreign public official

There is also a 'corporate offence' of failing to prevent bribery. Under this, the Trust will be guilty of an offence if an "associated person" bribes someone else intending to obtain or retain business, or a business advantage, for the Trust. "Associated persons" may include employees, agents and subsidiaries.

Appendix F : Teachers' Standards

Preamble

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge; keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Part One: Teaching

A Teacher Must:

1. Set High Expectations Which Inspire, Motivate and Challenge Pupils

- Establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- Set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- Demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils

2. Promote Good Progress and Outcomes by Pupils

- Be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- Be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- Guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- Encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study

3. Demonstrate Good Subject and Curriculum Knowledge

- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
- If teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- If teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies

4. Plan and Teach Well Structured Lessons

- Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- Promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- Set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- Contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s)

5. Adapt Teaching to Respond to the Strengths and Needs of all Pupils

- Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them

6. Make Accurate and Productive Use of Assessment

- Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- Make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- Give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback

7. Manage Behaviour Effectively to Ensure a Good and Safe Learning Environment

- Have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- Have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- Manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- Maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary

8. Fulfil Wider Professional Responsibilities

- Make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- Deploy support staff effectively
- Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- Communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being

Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Name: _____

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Prosper Learning Trust Staff Code of Conduct.

I understand as an employee of Prosper Learning Trust, it is my responsibility to read and follow the Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____

Date: _____