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Community Inclusive Trust **Communications Policy**

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1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Trust's communication standards and expectations which it expects employees and volunteers to adhere to. This policy should be complied with to assist with good communication and standards of professional conduct across the Trust.

2. **Scope:**

The policy covers all acceptable methods of communication which should be used by employees and volunteers when corresponding on behalf of the Trust. All methods of communication support the Trust's vision and are aligned for the successful and growing organisation which it is.

3. **Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to ensure that all methods of communication across the Trust are clear, comprehensive, professional, appropriate, and in line with this policy.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to read and comply with this policy and any future versions of this policy.

Personnel are reminded that they are representative of CIT and must comply with this policy, Staff code of conduct, Privacy Policy and relevant Laws at all times.

Disciplinary action may be taken should any employee fail to comply with this policy.

4. **Definitions: Numbering needs formatting**

Not Applicable

5. **Introduction**

All communications across the Trust must be written with the purpose to:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Provide clear instruction and deadlines where necessary, which can be actioned within a reasonable time
- Be respectful and professional as well as appropriate for the circumstances
- Be clear, comprehensive, and easily understood by all
- Use an effective and appropriate communication method consistent with the context, message and audience
- Be in accordance with CIT and individual school policies where necessary.
- Be compatible with the Trust's Vision & Values, and School Improvement Plan
- Ensure personnel communicate via the appropriate reporting lines to ensure information is exchanged correctly
- Be in accordance with the Trust's General Data Policy and compliant with current UK and EU Laws.

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6. **Exceptions:**

This section details the expectations of the different personnel groups across the Trust.

Senior Leaders:

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels. Where practicable, a face to face meeting is acceptable.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments from all staff.
- To keep relevant personnel and governing body informed where required

All Staff:

- To communicate regularly with each other and in an appropriate manner, to ensure information is available and understood
- To ensure they maintain up to date knowledge by accessing relevant information to assist them in effective professional performance
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and other colleagues informed

Governors, Trustees and volunteers:

- To ensure the use of a trusted and chosen method of communication, including online spaces, and where this is used to be compliant with the Trust's social media policy.
- Use a variety of communication methods as agreed by the Trust in order to :
 - Engage the local community
 - Enhance stakeholder communications.
 - Engage with effective and constructive debate
 - Ensure there us a robust and transparent decision making process

7. **Communication Methods**

Standards

- All methods of communication must be respectful and professional.
- Personnel are reminded to go through the appropriate command channels where necessary to ensure probity at all times
- All communication must be clear and effective
- Communication must be in line with the Trust's purpose and reflective of its Values.
- Staff and volunteers are reminded to ensure communication methods promote the best interest of the Trust and its stakeholders.
- Whilst the Trust considers there is value in establishing friendly relationships, personnel and volunteers are reminded to separate professional and personal relationships. Where a personal relationship exists or becomes apparent (for example, a staff member is in the same friendship group with a parent of a pupil in the Trust, or a professional contractor who is engaged in supplying services for the Trust) staff are reminded to ensure they uphold standards and

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should not disclose confidential information. Moreover, personnel are reminded they are representative of the Trust and must uphold the professional standards expected of them. Should a personal or professional relationship exist or become apparent, a disclosure must be made using the appropriate disclosure personal and pecuniary interests' form (a copy can be found on the website) and submitted to the School Operations Manager, Company Secretary and the Safeguarding Lead of the School.

- Sharing of sensitive information must be conducted in accordance with our GDPR policy, safeguarding policy and code of conduct. Please ask your line manager for assistance if you are unsure.
- Correspondence must not contain slang, or unprofessional content
- Internal discussions must not be forwarded outside of the organisation, unless there is a specific or legal requirement to do so (for example, under safeguarding, whistle blowing, or as a necessary requirement of your role). Personnel are reminded that sharing of confidential information must be conducted in accordance with the Trust's privacy Policy, GDPR policy and in line with current UK and EU Laws.
- You must remove all C.I.T contact details form an email thread when corresponding with individuals outside of the Trust.
- You must not share other people's personal or identifiable information unless it is in accordance with the Trust's privacy policy and GDPR.
- Correspondence should be written in accordance with the Trust's Communications Policy

The following are acceptable methods of communication across or on behalf of the Trust:

Internal Methods of Communication

Induction pack

- An induction pack including important information is given to employees and volunteers upon joining the Trust.

Meetings

- An integrated programme of meetings; formal, informal and bespoke to each individual academy, facilitates the involvement of staff,
- Formal meetings should be structured and minuted, with attendees being invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Staff meetings and group meetings take place regularly.
- Informal meetings between groups also take place allowing employees an opportunity to discuss and develop ideas.

Written Communication

- E-mail is a quick and effective way of communicating information. There are circumstances where email correspondence is preferable in order to communicate in a clear and constructive setting.

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- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes (if applicable). Only the addressee may open letters addressed to them. Sensitive information should be delivered and recorded on the confidential data exchange (a copy is available in reception)

Electronic Communications

The Trust has implemented a number of acceptable electronic communication methods:

- Email
- Mobile phone and site switchboards
- Trust and school websites
- Skype for business
- C.I.T news on the Trust website
- C.I.T newsletter which is emailed to all staff
- C.I.T server and remote desktop
- Board reporting portal (Trustees only)

External Methods of Communicating

- Personnel must only correspond for or on behalf of the Trust where there is a legitimate reason to do so (for example, as part of your role, a specific duty as instructed by your line manager)
- You must only communicate information which you are authorised to disclose. For more information, contact the GDPR officer or Head of Governance

Prohibited communication methods

- Personnel must not host or engage in Trust communication via the following methods, unless authorised or directed to by a line manager or a function of their job description:
 1. Social media or messenger services.
 2. In a public forum
 3. In a public environment or space
- Employees and volunteers are reminded they are representatives of C.I.T, as such, they are reminded to uphold the professional standards of the Trust.
- Disciplinary action may be taken if an employee fails to conduct communications in accordance with this policy or any later version of this policy.

8. References:

Staff Code of Conduct
Privacy Policy
C.I.T GDPR Policy

9. Acronyms:

Not Applicable

10. External References:

GDPR- General Data Protection Legislation

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11. Amendments to the Document:

This is policy had been adapted to reflect the Trust's values regarding communication.

Written By: G Tavener		Reviewed By: Senior Leadership Team
Signed: <i>G TAVENER</i>		Signed:
Date: 06/01/2019		Date: 18/03/2019

