

RMT Code of Conduct for Staff	
Date approved by Trustees	November 2017
Date for next review	February 2022
Compliance lead	Director of People, Employee Engagement and PSTE
Agreed Policy file name	RMT Code of Conduct for Staff
Agreed policy location:	RMT Information area\Policies and Procedures RMT website

This policy applies to all schools, colleges, central services and other provisions operated by Ruskin Mill Trust (RMT) including Ruskin Mill Trust’s subsidiaries.

1. Introduction

1.1 This code provides all staff with guidance on how the Trust expects them to behave. If the code is followed then staff should not find themselves in a situation where their conduct could create an impression of conflict of interest or inappropriate behaviour. If staff are unsure of the standards, expected of them they should seek guidance from the leader of the RMT provision or central services function where they work.

2. Purpose

2.1 This document is an agreed code to meet the operational needs of the schools, colleges and other provisions operated by Ruskin Mill Trust (hereafter ‘the Trust’ or RMT). This includes the staff employed by the RMT subsidiary, Transform Residential Limited. It identifies the contractual duty of every member of staff, volunteer and self- employed contractor (hereafter referred to collectively as ‘staff’ or as ‘staff members’): to observe the following code and to behave at all times in a reasonable way towards fellow staff, volunteers, apprentices, trainees, agency workers, trustees/non-executive directors, contractors, visitors, students and their parents or guardians and members of the public. The term ‘student’ is used in the code to represent any pupil, student or service-user on the roll of any of the schools, colleges or other provisions operated by RMT. A breach of your contract or of this code will be treated as misconduct or gross misconduct and will render you liable to disciplinary action including dismissal or removal from site if an agency worker, volunteer, self-employed contractor.

2.2 The conduct, behaviour and practice of all staff will have an influence on the development of students. This code sets out to guide the everyday judgements and actions of staff, providing clear guidance on what is acceptable conduct and what is not.

2.3 This code assumes that every member of staff will make every effort to embrace, articulate and work with the Ruskin Mill Trust’s objectives, vision, values, purpose and method, ensuring that the Ruskin Mill Trust’s paradigm of biodynamic agriculture, Anthroposophical medicine and practical skills education, which is informed by Steiner Education, is maintained, implemented and integrated within the provision of the Trust.

2.4 This Code of Conduct does not cover every eventuality.

3. **Applicability**

3.1 This code applies to all staff working in any of the schools, colleges or other provisions operated by RMT or its subsidiary companies and trusts regardless of the contractual basis of the engagement; including:

- Direct employment by the Trust under a contract of employment;
- Secondments (both to and from the Trust);
- Temporary assignments (both to and from the Trust); including Agency Workers, Employees engaged through the Trust’s Temporary Support Service, Work Placements, Apprentices and Trainees;
- Trustees /Non-Executive Directors;
- Employees acting on behalf of the Trust as members of companies or voluntary organisations.

3.2 References to “staff” or “staff members” throughout this code are taken to include all of the above categories and any similar working arrangements.

3.3 This code also extends to additional and dual employment that has been secured as a result of working for the Trust.

3.4 The current provisions and their satellite provisions and subsidiaries covered by the policy are as follows:

- Ruskin Mill College
- Glasshouse College
- Argent College
- Freeman College
- Coleg Plas Dwbl
- Clervaux Trust Limited
- Brantwood Specialist School and the Coach House
- Sunfield School and Children’s Home
- Lantern Trading Limited
- Glasshouse Trading Limited
- Transform Residential Ltd
- Clervaux Garden School

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The RMT Executive Team are responsible for ensuring that all Headteachers, Principals, other leaders of RMT provisions as well as Directors and Heads of Central Services departments are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct.
- 4.2 The Headteacher, Principal or other leader of RMT provision (hereafter 'provision leader') of each RMT school, college or other provision (hereafter 'provision') and the Head or Director (also referred to as 'provision leader' in this document) of each Central Service Department (also referred to as 'provision' in this document) is responsible for ensuring all staff in their provision are made aware of, and adhere to, the Code of Conduct and for providing support and encouragement to ensure staff maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, accountability and openness.
- 4.3 All staff are responsible for reading and adhering to the Code of Conduct, and for reflecting on their own conduct and practice and ensuring they meet the standards required of them.

5. Standards

- 5.1 Staff are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the Trust and to provide advice to Trustees/Non-Executive Directors and fellow staff with impartiality. The highest standard of probity must apply at all times.
- 5.2 Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken. Serious breaches may result in dismissal from the Trust's employment. A list of examples of behaviour that can be considered to breach this code can be found in section 25 at the end of this document.
- 5.3 The Trust, for its part, considers it has a duty to protect staff against unjustified allegations of wrongdoing.
- 5.4 Standards: The following standards apply to all Trust staff:

6. General

- 6.1 All staff are expected to apply the values of the Trust in their conduct at work, demonstrating honesty and integrity at all times. In general terms, the Trust expects that the conduct of its staff is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of staff at any RMT provision. Any complaints about inappropriate conduct will be dealt with fairly and reasonably, using the agreed procedures.
- 6.2 All staff are expected to use their professional expertise and judgement to put the wellbeing, development and progress of students first, within the context of their role.

- 6.3 All individuals associated with the Trust have the right to be treated with respect and dignity; therefore, all staff are expected to treat colleagues, students, parents, other bodies or agencies or members of the community with dignity and respect.
- 6.4 Staff should not use their position within the Trust for any purpose other than the business of the RMT provision where they work.
- 6.5 The Trust has an agreed procedure for the management of staff discipline. All staff should make themselves aware of this procedure and its content. The procedure's name is Trust Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.
- 6.6 All staff are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. Where a staff member breaks the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or has a direct effect on work of the Trust, the staff member may be subject to disciplinary action under the Trust's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.
- 6.7 Staff are required to adhere to the RMT Health and Safety Policy and Procedure.
- 6.8 The Trust operates a 'no smoking' policy at all its provisions. Some RMT provisions currently have designated smoking areas for students, staff and visitors, which is always subject to change. Students, staff and visitors must not smoke in areas that are not designated smoking areas.
- 6.9 Where a staff member is taking prescribed drugs, he/she should inform the provision leader where this may affect behaviour and/or performance at work.
- 6.10 It is good practice for staff to inform the provision leader if suffering from a medical condition, or have personal circumstances that may adversely affect performance at work.
- 6.11 All staff are expected to abide by all the terms and conditions of their employment/engagement and to fulfil the requirements of their role/function/duties. This specification applies when working on all Trust premises and locations or representing the Trust.

7. Gifts and hospitality

- 7.1 Staff may from time to time be offered gifts or hospitality, for example from parents. The following advice should guide decisions on receipt of such gifts/hospitality:
 - 7.1.1 Small individual thank you gifts may be accepted. This includes gifts resulting from collections (e.g. weddings or leaving presents). All provisions hold a gift log and all gifts must be agreed with the senior managers and recorded in the gift log. The gift log is signed by the provision leader.

- 7.1.2 Always refuse a gift/offer of hospitality if you suspect the giver is trying to gain or has an ulterior motive. Always be sensitive to the possibility the giver may think that even small gift/offer hospitality may elicit preferential treatment.
- 7.1.3 Never accept a gift/offer of hospitality from someone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the Trust, seeking employment with the Trust, or in any form of dispute with the Trust or any of its provisions.
- 7.1.4 Invitations to corporate hospitality events must be judged on their merit. It may be acceptable, for example, to attend cultural events or other public performances as a representative of the Trust. If in doubt, staff must speak with their manager.
- 7.1.5 Invitations to speak at corporate events, seminars or gatherings which have been made to you in the capacity of your work for the Trust, must be approved by your provision leader before acceptance.

8. Financial and personal interests

- 8.1 RMT staff must at all, times be seen to be acting fairly and impartially and personal needs or interests, or those of family or friends, must not influence actions or decisions.
- 8.2 Where a staff member has a friend, associate or relative, who is providing goods or services to the Trust, of a kind that the staff member deals with directly or monitors in the course of his/her work, this should be disclosed. Disclosures must be made in writing to the provision leader, who will advise any other Trust senior staff who may need to be ware.
- 8.3 A direct financial interest arises where a staff member or their partner, family member or close friend, has a financial interest in a contract or proposed contract whether to their advantage or disadvantage, in which the Trust is involved.
- 8.4 A non-financial interest may occur when a staff member or their partner, family member or close friend, has membership or association in a company, society, club or other body, trade union or voluntary body, or is employed by another person or company, which has direct financial interests in any matter, which is the subject of discussions with the Trust.
- 8.5 Staff should register with their provision leader any membership of an Organisation not open to the public that has secrecy about rules, membership and/or conduct.
- 8.6 Off-duty hours are generally the personal concern of the staff member. However, staff members must not engage in any outside activity that may conflict with the interests of the Trust or could damage the confidence of the

community in which the provision is located.

- 8.7 Staff may not promote any partisan political views in their teaching of any subject or in any other interaction with students. When any political issues are discussed with students, staff are responsible for ensuring that students are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

9. Intellectual Property

- 9.1 Intellectual Property, for example, computer programmes or written documents, is property, which enjoys legal protection and, therefore, belongs to the Trust not to you personally, even if you have created it at work.
- 9.2 You must not make use of the Trust's intellectual property to conduct private work.
- 9.3 Any copies of material taken for use within the Trust must only be for use in connection with your role in the Trust.

10. Other employment

- 10.1 Members of the senior management team or senior leadership team of any of the RMT provisions, must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment without the written consent of the provision leader. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 10.2 Other staff may take up additional employment without consent, providing the employment does not conflict with the interests of the Trust, or in any way weaken the confidence of the community, where the provision is located in the work of that provision. If in doubt, please make a written request to your provision leader where your request will be considered.
- 10.3 Where a staff member undertakes additional employment, he/she must notify the provision leader of the number of hours he/she is working per week, to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Directive.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1 Confidential information must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a right to know. Paper-based and electronic information must be stored securely and confidentially with access limited to those who have a right to view it.
- 11.2 Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential or that, if it were made public, may lead to a breakdown in the trust and confidence that the RMT provision is required to provide to its local community. It may be necessary to discuss confidential information with colleagues. Where this is the case, the discussions must take place in private.

- 11.3 Staff members must not disclose any information about the Trust, the provision where they work or its students or their parents or carers to the press or other media unless expressly authorised to do so by the provision leader.
- 11.4 Staff members must not disclose information about the Trust, the provision where they work or its students or their parents or carers on social networking sites or such similar sites. Staff should consider the information that they include on these sites and how the information may impact on the Trust and its reputation. Inappropriate disclosure of information may be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.
- 11.5 Staff members should not put confidential or sensitive information on memory sticks which have not been encrypted to ensure confidential information cannot be accessed should the stick be lost or misplaced.

12. Contact with the Media or other individuals or organisations

- 12.1 Any enquiries from the media should be referred to the Publicity Manager. You should not speak to the media on the Trust's behalf, unless you have prior approval. You should also familiarise yourself with the Communications contact policy.
- 12.2 If you wish to publish books, articles or letters you have written in connection with your duties, you must first consult your provision leader who will refer this to the executive team for approval. This also applies if you wish to participate or engage in any research or the creating or articles, letters or books which may have an impact on the Trust. Only with their consent may items be published or engaged with.

13. Recruitment and Appointment

- 13.1 Staff involved in recruitment and appointment must apply the Trust's recruitment and selection processes and ensure student safety, fairness and equality is applied at all times.
- 13.2 Where a staff member is involved in recruitment or making an appointment, he/she must advise the provision leader if he/she is closely associated with any of the candidates (e.g. close friend, relative).

14. Dress and Presentation

- 14.1 The Trust has not adopted a formal dress code. The Trust expects staff to dress in a manner that is professional and appropriate for the activity/work they are carrying out. Clothes should provide sufficient cover and not be offensive including any tattoo's that are visible, must not be offensive or should be covered up. Choice of dress and footwear should demonstrate sufficient regard for health and safety and staff are expected to observe a standard of personal hygiene and appearance.

14.2 All personal protective equipment must be worn where required.

15. Safeguarding (see also the RMT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

15.1 All staff are responsible for following and adhering to the Trust's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures.

15.2 All staff are expected to use the appropriate channels, as set out in the relevant procedures, to raise concerns about the practice of others if there is suspicion that their conduct has a negative impact on learning or causes harm to students.

15.3 Staff members must inform the provision leader as soon as reasonably practicable, if they are subject to a criminal investigation or have received a conviction, caution or have been banned from working with children or vulnerable adults.

16. Physical contact with students

16.1 Staff may have cause to have physical contact with students for a variety of reasons:

- to comfort a student in distress.
- to gently direct a student.
- for curricula reasons, e.g. in physical activities such as drama or in craft workshops.
- in an emergency to avert danger to the student or others.
- in rare situations when physical restraint is needed.

16.2 Staff must be aware of, and follow the guidance physical contact and restraint that is laid out in the Trust's Behaviour Support and Sanctions Policy.

16.3 In all situations when physical contact between staff and student takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the student's age and level of understanding as to why physical contact is made.
- the student's individual characteristics e.g. whether physical contact might be misinterpreted or resented.
- the location where the contact takes place. It should NEVER take place in private without a witness being present.
- minimum physical contact should be used.
- physical contact will NEVER be used as a punishment and **all forms of corporal punishment are prohibited.**
- any complaints about any form of physical contact should be dealt with under the Trusts' Complaints procedure.

17. Arrest or conviction on civil or criminal charges

17.1 You must, as soon as practicable inform the provision leader, at each stage, if you are arrested, charged, refused bail, required to attend court, convicted or sentenced for any criminal or civil offence. This does not apply to traffic offences unless this involves a situation relating to the transport of students/pupils/children, or the possible penalty includes imprisonment or disqualification from driving or involves an official vehicle. Failure to inform will be considered an act of gross misconduct.

18. Relationships with parents and carers

18.1 All staff should strive to establish productive relationships with parents and carers.

18.2 Where students are under 18 and for those over 18 where they agree, this will include providing parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about the student's progress involving parents and carers in important decisions about the student's education, considering parents and carer's views and perspectives and following the Trust's policies on communication and involvement with parents and carers.

18.3 Where an interaction with a parent or carer becomes aggressive or offensive, the interaction should be ended politely and firmly, with assistance summoned where required. Risk assessments should be undertaken prior to any contact with parents/carers where aggression or violence is anticipated and the appropriate lone working procedures must be instigated.

19. Relationships with colleagues

19.1 Staff members and colleagues should strive to maintain co-operative and effective working relationships. Relationships should be courteous, reasonable and fair at all times.

19.2 Staff should carry out all reasonable and lawful instructions given by those in authority to the best of their ability.

19.3 The provision leaders and their deputies should exercise any leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with Trust policies, contractual obligations and national standards.

19.4 The provision leaders and their deputies should use the appropriate performance management frameworks to appraise the performance of direct reports and provide feedback. They should provide honest, accurate and justifiable comments when providing feedback, and ensure that staff undertake the training and development opportunities made available by the Hiram Education and Research Team.

19.5 The provision leaders and their deputies must ensure staff are aware of, and have access to, the relevant policies and procedures that affect their work.

20. Working as part of a team

20.1 Staff should endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with colleagues and to participate in development and improvement activities.

20.2 Staff should uphold all Trust policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the life or running of the provision where they work in an appropriate and responsible way.

20.3 Staff should recognise the important role of the RMT provision where they work in the life of its community and take responsibility for upholding its reputation and building trust and confidence in it.

20.4 Staff should co-operate with other professionals involved with the students, establishing effective and productive relationships with other professional colleagues.

20.5 Staff should at all times ensure they act within their sphere of their own competence and responsibilities and seek clarification where this is needed.

20.6 Staff should at all times work as a professional role model for other staff and students at all times.

21. Respect for diversity and promoting equality

21.1 All staff must act appropriately towards all students, parents, carers and colleagues, whatever their socio-economic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.

21.2 Staff must take responsibility for understanding and complying with Trust policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion, access and bullying.

21.3 Staff should help to create a fair and inclusive learning environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.

21.4 Staff should strive to address discrimination, bullying or stereotyping, or seek assistance from the provision leader where issues are identified.

22. Working with money

22.1 Staff receiving or responsible for Trust money, need to take particular care and must adhere to the appropriate financial procedures at all times.

22.2 Staff submitting claims for reimbursement of legitimate expenditure must ensure the correct procedures are followed, the details of the claim are within set limits and can be substantiated (e.g. with receipts).

23. Using Trust resources and premises

23.1 Equipment supplied by the Trust should not be used for personal use unless authorised by the provision leader. This includes photocopying facilities, stationery, telephones, computers and premises.

23.2 The use of the RMT IT systems, particularly email and internet, should only be used for professional purposes. ICT Password should be kept confidential at all times and not disclosed to any other individual.

24. Working Safely

24.1 Both the Trust and its staff are responsible for ensuring that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.

24.2 Actions or omissions of any individual that place others in danger may lead to disciplinary action.

24.3 Staff are expected to:

- adhere to the Trust's health and safety policy and rules.
- advise the provision leader or other appropriate person of any unsafe situations or practices.
- take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of other staff, students and any other users of Trust premises.
- wear any safety clothing or equipment and ensure all students are wearing and use appropriate equipment.
- report any injuries, accidents or near misses to the appropriate Responsible Person.
- report incidents of abusive/aggressive or bullying/threatening behaviour that is experienced or witnessed to the appropriate Responsible Person.
- advise the provision leader when taking any medication that could affect the ability to work safely.
- comply with hygiene requirements.

25. Protecting the Trust and its standards

25.1 Where a staff member has reason to suspect that colleagues are acting improperly, the staff member should report these suspicions to the provision leader (or to a member of the RMT Executive Team if the suspicions concern the provision leader). The staff member will be assured that concerns, when made in good faith, will be heard without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage in accordance with the confidential reporting code and the Trust's Whistle Blowing Policy.

25.2 Improper conduct can cover a wide range, including financial irregularity, abuse of students, abuse of power or position, neglect of duty, discrimination, bullying or harassment, in accordance with the confidential reporting code.

25.3 **Gross misconduct:** Staff should not commit any act of gross misconduct. Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract and includes misconduct which, in the opinion of the Trust, is likely to prejudice Trust business or reputation or create irreparably damage to the working relationship and trust between employer and employee. Gross misconduct will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure. Any such act will result in your dismissal without notice. Gross misconduct includes but is not limited to the examples set out below, offences of a similar nature and attempts to commit such offences.

25.4 Examples of gross misconduct:

- Indecent, violent or offensive behaviour whether committed at or outside work;
- Inappropriate conduct with a student;
- Using Trust resources (or any other resources if during working time) to deliberately view, retrieve or download pornographic material or any other material which the Trust reasonably believes is unsuitable;
- Conviction for a criminal offence that in our opinion may affect our reputation or our relationships with our employees, students or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to remain an employee;
- Being placed on one of the barred lists maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- Failure to comply with the Trust's Student Protection Policies;
- Failure to notify the Trust of any safeguarding investigation of any member of your household;
- Failure to report that they have discovered that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out;
- Repeated or serious disobedience of instructions, or other serious act of insubordination;
- Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- Serious breach of confidence;
- Misuse of or deliberate damage to Trust buildings, fittings, property or equipment, or the property of an employee, contractor, student or member of the public;
- Fraud, forgery, theft or dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets;
- Being on duty whilst unfit due to the influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs (whether inside or outside work);
- Conduct (whether committed at or outside work) which is likely to damage the Trust's reputation;
- Disregarding health and safety rules/requirements and endangering yourself or others;

- Serious neglect or refusal of duty;
- Misuse of confidential information;
- Knowingly or recklessly breaching statutory rules affecting your employment;
- Harassment or discrimination contrary to our Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure or our Dignity at Work Policy;
- Promotion of partisan political views;
- Refusal to disclose any of the information required by the Trust or any other information that may have a bearing on the employment or performance of your duties;
- Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain or continue in employment or to receive other benefits;
- Knowingly taking parental, paternity or adoption leave when not eligible to do so or for a purpose other than supporting a child;
- Bullying;
- Making a disclosure of false or misleading information under the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith;
- Making untrue allegations in bad faith against another employee;
- Victimising another employee who has raised concerns, made a complaint or given evidence information under the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, Dignity at Work Policy, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure or otherwise;
- Serious misuse of the Trust's information technology systems (including misuse of developed or licensed software, use of unauthorised software and misuse of e-mail and the internet) contrary to our E-mail and Internet Policy;
- Undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment during your working hours;
- Unauthorised entry into an area of the premises to which access is prohibited.

25.5 Other instances of misconduct: The following is a non-exhaustive list of offences which amount to misconduct falling short of gross misconduct:

- Failure to embrace, articulate and work with the Ruskin Mill Trust's objectives, vision, values, purpose and method, ensuring that the Ruskin Mill Trust's paradigm of biodynamic agriculture, Anthroposophical medicine and practical skills education, which is informed by Steiner Education, is maintained, implemented and integrated within the provision of the Trust.
- Unauthorised absence from work;
- Inappropriate standard of dress;
- Smoking on Trust premises which are not designated smoking areas;
- Time wasting;
- Contravention of minor safety regulations (health and safety or minor negligence);
- Disruptive behaviour;
- Refusal to follow instructions;

- Poor time keeping;
- Damage to, or unauthorised use of, Trust property;
- Obscene language or other offensive behaviour;
- Minor breaches of your employment contract;
- Minor breaches of Trust policies