

Staff Code of Conduct



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Responsible Colleagues

Director of HR

We have one core purpose:

To have the biggest positive impact in the varied communities we serve through ensuring top drawer education for our learners.

How do we ensure this across our trust?

In all we do we are:

Ethical to the core, ensuring that education is always front and centre

Futures focused system leaders - never simply followers

Collaborative in every endeavour

Resolutely learner centred.

What does this look like across our trust?

We are always:



Education

- Ruthlessly ambitious for all who learn and work with us
- Unwaveringly inclusive – determined on eradicating barriers to educational success
- Committed to excellent teaching
- Determined upon academic excellence for all in our communities
- Compassionate, ethical and caring advocates for all in our communities
- Outwardly facing and globally conscious



Operations

- Committed to the very best people development and empowerment
- Determined to shout loudly and share proudly our successes
- The best professional and technical experts (supporting education) in the sector
- Committed to the very best understanding and management of risk



Financial

- Providing the best possible public service for the best possible value
- Determined to supplement our public income with shrewd income generation
- Building financially sustainable models of educational improvement in our communities
- Demonstrably efficient in all we do

Our Values

- We will work inclusively within our communities, embracing the varied localities we serve while sharing our common vision and values.
- We will develop the very best leaders of the future, working to improve education and transform lives.
- We will adhere unwaveringly to the 'Nolan Principles' of Public Service, which is made clear in our commitment to Ethical Leadership.

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Statement of Intent

We are proud of the many professions working inside our trust and proud to be professional!

While every organisation must have a clear statement of professional expectations, we are confident that much of what we state in this policy is a commitment to the obvious for all of our colleagues.

Key Principles

Our key principles for safe and professional conduct are:

1. Complying with relevant law and regulation
2. Ensuring that we are clear that conflicts of interest, bribery and corruption are not in line with our ethical principles
3. Respecting the confidentiality of personal and corporate information
4. Promoting diversity and equality and treating people fairly and with respect
5. Maintaining a safe and healthy environment for people to work in and being proactive in managing our responsibilities to the environment
6. Supporting those who have any suspicions of any misconduct, malpractice, illegal or unethical behaviour and reporting their concerns in confidence to the appropriate channels.

The importance of professional behaviour

We know that our professional behaviour inspires and impacts our learners. We are therefore committed to demonstrating the very best standards of behaviour. Our Code of Conduct and our *Academy Way* appendices aim to engender and foster exemplary behaviours which enable our people to be the best role models for our learners:

“Being a role model is the most powerful form of educating. Youngsters need good models more than they need critics” (John Wooden)

This code also provides a clear framework for leadership behaviours so that our aspirant leaders are always learning from the very best:

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing” (Albert Schweitzer)

Ensuring safeguarding

We are committed to our duty to keep our people and our learners safe, to promote their welfare and to protect them from radicalisation (the Prevent Duty), abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and any other safeguarding concerns or risks. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between our people and our learners and professional behaviour that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

This code cannot and does not provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate professional behaviour; but it does provide a clear professional conduct framework for all our colleagues. It must be read and used alongside the key policies and documents listed on the title page.

1 | Legal Framework and Definitions

- 1.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to:
- *Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act (1995)*
 - *Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)*
 - *Bribery Act (2010)*
 - *Employment Rights Act (1996)*
 - *Employment Act (2002)*
- 1.2 This policy also takes account of the most recent versions of the following guidance (statutory and non-statutory); *Keeping Children Safe in Education* Department of Education (DfE) (statutory), *Working Together to Safeguard Children* HM Government (statutory) and *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings* (non-statutory).
- 1.3 Where this policy refers to *ATT* or *our Trust*, this should be taken to include any member of our staff, including governors and Trustees.

2 | Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 The statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment contained in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* states that governing bodies and proprietors should have a staff behaviour policy.
- 2.2 This code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, any breaches of the code will not be managed through our disciplinary procedure. It applies to those working with us on a voluntary basis, and there is a supplementary code of conduct for those involved in our governance.
- 2.3 As recognisable figures in local communities, the behaviour and conduct of our people outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.
- 2.4 This policy applies to any area where a regulatory body has deemed responsibility to be within the trust's remit.
- 2.5 This policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with our recognised trade union colleagues.

3 | Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

- 3.1 We are all responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and must have fully read and understood our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. We are required to act as soon as reasonably possible and always by the end of the academy day, to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.2 We must all be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified and we should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.

4 | Duty of Care

- 4.1 We must all:
- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of our contract of employment or role, and be aware that sanctions may be applied if these provisions are breached
 - Always act, and be seen to act, in our learners' best interests
 - Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question our motivation and/or intentions
 - Take responsibility for our own actions and behaviour

5 | Health and Safety

- 5.1 We must all ensure that we read, understand and comply with our Health and Safety Policy.

6 | Honesty and Personal Integrity

- 6.1 We are all expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct and must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by leaders, line managers or Trustees.
- 6.2 We must all uphold public confidence in our trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside work, by:
- Treating learners and colleagues with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to our professional position
 - Having regard for the need to safeguard learners' and colleagues' 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 learners' or colleagues' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 6.3 We must all have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of our trust and maintain high standards in our own attendance and punctuality. We must treat all colleagues with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy at all times.
- 6.4 Each academy Principal will securely maintain a conduct log which will assist in identifying any themes or patterns in behaviour which will then inform decisions about training and development needs within each academy.
- 6.5 We must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in our work.

7 | Tackling Discrimination

- 7.1 We must all read and understand our Anti Bullying Policy and Dignity at Work Policy. We must understand the types of discrimination and bullying that learners and colleagues may be subject to and must not ignore any form of discrimination.

8 | Professional Boundaries and Relationships

- 8.1 We are all in a position of trust in relation to our learners which means that the relationship between a colleague and a learner is never one of equals. It is a specific offence for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a child or learner under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child or learner, even if the relationship is consensual. We must always follow safe working practices and the guidance provided in [Appendix 1](#). Further information and advice can also be found in this [Guidance](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- 8.2 We must ensure that we avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that we may have with learners. We must not make sexual remarks to any learner or discuss our own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of learners. We must not discuss a learner's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. **Any sexual behaviour by a colleague towards any learner is unacceptable.**
- 8.3 We must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that we should not show favouritism to any learner and should not allow learners to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. **Learners are not our friends and should never be treated as such.**
- 8.4 We know that it is not uncommon for learners to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any colleague becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with their line manager immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way(s) to manage the situation.
- 8.5 For colleagues who are in a relationship with another colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the academy or trust, we expect that they identify this to the Principal or Director or Executive Leader and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way. Where a colleague has managerial authority over another colleague with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the trust reserves the right to transfer one or both colleagues to another role within the trust following appropriate consultation with both colleagues in order to seek agreement to the transfer.

9 | Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 9.1 We may have access to confidential information about learners, colleagues or other matters relating to the academy or trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a learner's home life. We should never use this information for our own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. We should never disclose this information unless this is in the appropriate circumstances and with the proper authority. If

a colleague is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed, they should speak to the data protection lead in their academy or the Data Protection Officer (DPO) for the Trust.

- 9.2 We are expected to read and understand our *Guide to Data Protection* and relevant data protection policies and to comply with our Trust's systems as set out in that policy. If any colleague becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, they must report it immediately to the Data Protection Lead or the DPO.

10 | Physical Contact with Learners

- 10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for colleagues to have physical contact with learners. We must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to our professional role and in response to the learner's needs at the time and we should always be able to explain why we have made physical contact with a learner. We should ensure that they have read and understood specific academy policies on physical contact, use of reasonable force and behaviour management.
- 10.2 There may be occasions where a learner is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If a colleague is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to a line manager. Always follow safe working practices as detailed in [Appendix 1](#). Further information and advice can also be found in this [Guidance](#) from the Safer Recruitment Consortium.
- 10.3 We may legally physically intervene with learners to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 10.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with learners is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

11 | Behaviour Management

- 11.1 We must not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a learner. Where learners display difficult or challenging behaviour, we should follow our *Behaviour Policy* using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.

12 | Social Contact with Learners

- 12.1 **We should not connect with or establish or seek to establish social contact with learners via any channels (including social media) at all** except for academy or trust social media platforms (e.g. academy Facebook pages/groups) which are to be used only for professional purposes and not for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- 12.2 We must only use our work provided equipment for communicating with learners. If there are any circumstances in which a colleague has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any learner then they should report this to their line manager immediately.
- 12.3 Our Trust and our academies are part of communities and we recognise that, as members of the community, we will come into contact with learners outside of the academy. We will use our professional judgement in such situations and will report to our line manager immediately any contact that we have had with a learner, outside of school, that we are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.
- 12.4 We should all read, understand and adhere to our E-Safety Policy, Social Media Policy and any other academy policies in relation to social media.

13 | Online Conduct

- 13.1 We must all ensure that all possible privacy settings on social media networking sites are activated to prevent learners from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent them from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on our profiles on social networking sites.
- 13.2 We are all personally responsible for what we communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be available to be read by us, pupils, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. We must ensure that our on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected of us and must not post material which damages the reputation of our trust or which causes concern about our suitability to work with children and young people.
- 13.3 Any online teaching must follow the same principles as set out in this *Code of Conduct* and all other policies and procedures. Any misconduct online will be dealt with in the same way as any other misconduct and in line with this code and our disciplinary procedure.
- 13.4 We must only use the secure online platforms provided by the academy and trust to facilitate online teaching.

- 13.5 Live streams to conduct lessons are not recommended and therefore we should record our lessons and upload the recording to the relevant secure academy site for our learners to access.

14 | Photography, Videos and Other Images/Media

- 14.1 Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken or used for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should we use our personal equipment to take images of learners at or on behalf of the academy or trust nor should we download images from academy equipment to personal devices.

15 | Working One to One with Learners

- 15.1 There will be times where we are working one to one with a learner and this is acceptable. We need to understand that this means that we may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against us. Therefore, it is important that we:
- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas
 - Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
 - Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting beforehand
 - Report to our line manager if the learner becomes distressed or angry.

16 | Curriculum

- 16.1 Many areas of our curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with learners to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. Health and Social Care, PSHE, Drama.
- 16.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and we should take guidance in these circumstances from the

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where possible, particularly after we have dealt with something that has made us feel uncomfortable. This will allow us to discuss with our DSL how we handled the situation and any learning points.

17 | Professional Appearance

- 17.1 The *Academy Way* describes our dress code and expectations and we must read and adhere to this.

18 | Gifts and Hospitality

- 18.1 The trust has an *Anti-bribery and Gifts and Hospitality Policy* and we must all read and adhere to this.
- 18.2 We must not give gifts to learners unless this is part of a recognised practice and in line with our behaviour policy.

19 | Conflicts of Interest

- 19.1 It is important that, where decisions are made which have a significant effect on the trust and others, they are taken in a fair and balanced way. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared so that individuals are not involved in decisions that could be regarded as biased.

20 | Keeping Within the Law

- 20.1 We are all expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, being taken. However, being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that employment is at risk.

- 20.2 We must ensure that we uphold the law and that we never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in us or the trust or the academy, or which makes us unsuitable for the work that we are employed to do. This includes, for example:
- Submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing, or other benefit claims)
 - Breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
 - Sexual offences which will render us unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - Crimes of dishonesty which render us unfit to hold a position of trust.
- 20.3 Colleagues must inform their academy Principal immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed in our Trust (this includes outside of their working hours). This must be done without delay in order to allow for appropriate responses and mitigation to be made by the academy. The Principal will need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the academy or trust or makes the colleague unsuitable to carry out their duties or if any action is needed to mitigate any risk or concerns.
- 20.4 If any matter detailed in 20.3 applies to a Principal or an Executive Principal then the relevant National Education Director should be informed immediately.
- 20.5 If any matter detailed in 20.3 applies to any colleague not working in one of our academies on a daily basis, our Chief Operating Officer should be informed immediately.

21 | Conduct Outside of Work and at Work Related Functions

- 21.1 Working in an educational trust means that our conduct outside of work may have an impact on our role. As such we must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the academy or Trust or our own reputation or the reputation of other members of the academy or trust community.
- 21.2 We must all be conscious that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the trust or affect the academy's or Trust's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure. We must therefore make our line manager aware immediately and without delay, of any such situations that have happened outside of work. This is to allow for any responses and/or mitigation to be made.

- 21.3 We are all required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation. Any incidents of poor or unacceptable behaviour may be dealt with appropriately either under our disciplinary procedures or by providing an opportunity for our colleagues to learn, develop and improve from feedback in relation to their behaviour or conduct.

Appendix 1- Establishing Safe Working Practices: Minimising Vulnerability to Allegations

Always:

- ✓ ...work in an open environment. Avoid private or out of sight locations and encourage open communication
- ✓ ...speak clearly, without whispering, so that learners do not need to come close to hear
- ✓ ...avoid spending time alone with individual learners away from others
- ✓ ...treat all learners, regardless of race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, equally and with respect and dignity
- ✓ ...ensure the learner's welfare comes first and record it
- ✓ ...be aware of the impact of proxemics; maintain safe and appropriate distances; know where and how to place your body
- ✓ ...avoid touching learners, but where **educationally necessary** staff should follow these guidelines:
 - try to demonstrate without touching first
 - ask permission; say what you intend to do first and explain why
 - if a pupil seems uncomfortable: stop
 - only touch hands, arms or shoulder nearest you (don't reach across the body)
 - be aware of overall proximity; maintain physical space; don't stand behind
 - inappropriate areas for touch include: chest, diaphragm, waist, thighs
 - move away as soon as the contact is no longer required
- ✓ ...maintain professional boundaries, perhaps using a specifically assigned mobile number or email address for work purposes, rather than sharing personal details
- ✓ ...present as an exemplary role model by not smoking or drinking alcohol, swearing, allowing suggestive conversations or jokes or wearing less than professional clothing when in the company of a learner
- ✓ ...seek to be enthusiastic and constructive when giving feedback rather than making negative or critical remarks
- ✓ ...record any injury that occurs and seek attention from a qualified First Aider or parent
- ✓ ...record any incident of concern involving learner's welfare.

Never:

- X ...allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon (this applies to any form of abuse or bullying)
- X ...lock doors, cover windows or use 'Do Not Disturb' signs
- X ...impose humiliating or power-based punishments on a learner or reduce a child to tears
- X ...engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- X ...allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- X ...share a bedroom with a learner
- X ...allow children/learners to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- X ...make sexually suggestive comments or 'jokes' to a child, even in fun
- X ...engage in any form of relationship, sexual or otherwise, with a young person you work with even if they are over the age of consent
- X ...do things of a personal or intimate nature for children or disabled young people that they can do for themselves
- X ...invite or allow children/learners to stay with you at your home
- X ...'friend' a child/learner on their social media or yours; social media can blur boundaries
- X ...take photographs or videos of children unless using an academy or trust device and written/signed consent has been obtained from a parent/carer; this includes the use of phones
- X ...seek physical contact. Try to gently discourage contact, rather than reject learners. Model appropriate contact, eg. shaking hands or patting the shoulder. Never allow physical contact when you are alone
- X ...take a child/learner in your car, but where this is unavoidable:
 - ensure that a manager has agreed in advance
 - prepare a risk assessment
 - ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and insurance covers business use
 - obtain parental permission, preferably in writing
 - take more than one person
 - sit child in the back
 - travel directly to the destination
 - keep conversation professional

Appendix 2- *The Academy Way*

[ACADEMY TO INSERT THEIR LOCAL "ACADEMY WAY"]