

# Staff Code of Conduct

Reference: PT/S

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
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## Who should use this policy?

This policy should be used by all staff (including supply) working for The Academies for Character and Excellence. This policy is also applicable to volunteers and contractors who also attend schools within the Trust.

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## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff (including supply), volunteers and contractors (hereafter referred to as employees) and to provide further information for employees. This could be read in conjunction with our disciplinary procedure and the Teachers' Standards where required.
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to employees the expectations the Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct, and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager or the Headteacher.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to volunteers, agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust 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 [please refer to the Disciplinary Policy].

## **3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

- 3.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action 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 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

- 3.3 To do this, employees must have fully read and understood our child protection / safeguarding and behaviour policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times along with all statutory guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2>

- 3.4 All employees must participate in the Safeguarding cycle of training.
- 3.5 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.
- 3.6 All employees must read and participate in any safeguarding process deemed necessary to safeguard children.

## **4 Duty of care**

Employees must:

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

## **5 Health & Safety**

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety statements produced by the Trust, which can be requested from the Headteacher or the Operations Lead, and can be found on the Trust and school website.
- Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy, which can be found on the Trust and school website.
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to you by the Trust
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust community or visitors.
- Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety requirement.

## **6 Honesty and personal integrity**

- 6.1 Employees are 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 at our Trust.
- 6.2 Employees uphold public trust in The Academies for Character and Excellence 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 their 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.
- 6.3 Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, values, policies and practices of The Academies for Character and Excellence and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 6.4 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of The Academies for Character and Excellence property and facilities.

## **7 Tackling discrimination**

- 7.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that pupils and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Equality and Diversity policy and Anti Bullying and Harassment policy.
- 7.2 Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality, diversity and inclusion at all times.

## **8 Professional boundaries and relationships**

- 8.1 Employees in The Academies for Character and Excellence are in a position of trust in relation to our pupils which means that the relationship between an employee and a pupil is not one of equal standing.
- 8.2 Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with pupils.
- 8.3 Employees must not make sexual remarks to any pupil or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of pupils. Employees must not discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any pupil is unacceptable and illegal.
- 8.4 Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any pupil and should not allow pupils to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Pupils are not employees friends and should not be treated as such.
- 8.5 Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with the Headteacher or line manager immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.
- 8.6 For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with The Academies for Character and Excellence we expect that they identify this to their Headteacher or line manager and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

## **9 Confidentiality and protection of data**

- 9.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils, colleagues or other matters relating to The Academies for Character and Excellence. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a pupil's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the appropriate authority.

- 9.2 If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to their Headteacher or line manager.
- 9.3 The Academies for Character and Excellence holds and processes data that is protected under the General Data Protection policy. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to their Headteacher or Line Manager along with the Trust's IT provider.
- 9.4 If you have any queries regarding the use of IT equipment and personal mobile phones, please refer to the Trust's mobile phone policy.
- 9.5 Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of our policies that relate to data including our IT policies.

## **10 Physical contact with pupils**

- 10.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the pupil's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the pupil. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a pupil.
- 10.2 There may also be occasions where a pupil is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee 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 their line manager.
- 10.3 Staff may legally physically intervene with pupils 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 intervention should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 10.4 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with pupils is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **11 Social contact with pupils**

- 11.1 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with pupils for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with pupils. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc., to any pupil then they should report this to their Headteacher/line manager.
- 11.2 The Academies for Character and Excellence's advice to staff is not to connect to pupils via social media or other communication channels. The Trust will make exceptions to this in the case of immediate family members only.
- 11.3 Our Trust is part of our community and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with pupils outside of the Trust. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to their line manager any contact that they have had with a pupil, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

## **12 Working one to one with pupils**

- 12.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a pupil and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:
- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school
  - 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, preferably beforehand
  - Reports to their line manager if the pupil becomes distressed or angry.

## **13 Dress and appearance**

Working in The Academies for Character and Excellence employees are role models to our pupils and how they present themselves is important. Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times with both clothing and shoes. Shoes need to be safe and presentable. We expect our pupils to be smart and presentable at all times and we expect the same standards from all our staff.

We do not permit the wearing of clothes that are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn at any times. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work.

Hair should be professional and presentable at all times including no extreme haircuts or colouring. Tattoos and body piercings will either need to be discreet or covered whilst at work.

Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Where we identify that an employee is wearing clothing that we do not find acceptable they will be informed and may be asked to go home and get changed or cover up.

## **14 Gifts and hospitality**

For many of our employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for The Academies for Character and Excellence that exceeds a nominal value of £25.00 must be declared to the Headteacher/line manager and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

It is traditional for pupils and their parents or carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from pupils and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Staff should make the Headteacher/line manager aware of any pupil who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any pupil or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

### **AND**

Staff should not give gifts to pupils unless this is part of a recognised practice.

## **15 Keeping within the law**

- 15.1 Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, including suspension which may lead to dismissal, being taken. Being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged could mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

15.2 Employees must ensure that they:

- Uphold the law at work
- Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or The Academies for Character and Excellence or which makes them unsuitable for the work they 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 them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
  - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
- Write and tell the Headteacher/line manager, or the ACE Strategic Advisor (ASA), or member of the People Team if they are the Headteacher, immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at The Academies for Character and Excellence (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher/line manager and/or ASA/member of the People Team will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in The Academies for Character and Excellence or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties. The Chair of the Local Committee will be advised of any staff that have been questioned by the police.

## **16 Conduct outside of work**

- 16.1 Unlike some other forms of employment, working at The Academies for Character and Excellence means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.
- 16.2 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust's community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that we become aware of that could impact on their role within the Trust or affect the Trust's reputation will be addressed under our disciplinary procedure. This includes use of social media even where comments are not publicly available.
- 16.3 We therefore expect employees to make us aware immediately of any such situations that have happened outside of The Academies for Character and Excellence.

## **17 Professional Conduct**

- 17.1 All staff should display the highest possible standards of professional behaviour at all times to everyone they come in contact with during their working day, whether that be in the classroom or in any recreational areas. If anyone's conduct or behaviour fails to meet these professional requirements, then these may be addressed under the Trust's disciplinary procedures.
- 17.2 Staff should seek to co-operate with their colleagues, providing support, help and guidance as required by them and their line manager.
- 17.3 All staff should ensure that they effectively and professionally communicate to all colleagues throughout the Trust.
- 17.4 We expect all our staff to have knowledge of the school and Trust values. Our values are our heartbeat and we would wish to ensure that all members of the team have awareness of them and strives to demonstrate them in our everyday activities.

## Appendix One

### Church Ethos and Distinctiveness

The Academies for Character and Excellence is a multi-academy trust with a values-led approach, which results in growth for all. We are a MAT with a mixture of Church and community schools, but our approach is underpinned by our Church school articles and majority foundation governance at all levels. We see our Church Schools as an essential part of our distinctiveness as a values-led organization.

Our overall enduring mission is to ensure that all our schools exemplify excellence through a focus on cultivating character, sharing talents and pursuing innovation. We believe in ensuring that our schools preserve their unique identities and traditions, in order to serve their different contexts and communities; however, we are all united in our determination to achieve excellence in many different forms – the character of children, the quality of the values-led education, our success in OFSTED and SIAMS inspections and the high achievements of our learners.

We are committed to preserving and developing the Christian Distinctiveness of our church schools, as well as ensuring that Character Education, through the vehicle of deeply embedded values, is at the heart of our work across our Trust.

Each of our Church school's Christian mission and values are informed by the Church of England Vision for Education – where we educate for **"Life in all its fullness"** (John 10:10). Within in approach are four basic elements: Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills; Educating for Hope and Aspiration; Educating for Community and Living Well Together; Educating for Dignity and Respect.

#### Code of Conduct in Church Schools

Employees within Church Schools in the Academies for Character and Excellence should be guided to behave in line with the distinctively Christian character of the school.

We believe that our Christian character underpins our relationships with one another. Members of staff are expected to uphold and support each school's Christian mission and school values. Therefore, all staff should seek to model wisdom, hope and aspiration, the art of living well together and are expected to behave with dignity and respect.

## Appendix Two

### Trust Values

Each of our schools in the Trust have their own set of values which sit under the Trust's mission of 'Excellence through Cultivating Character, Sharing Talents and Pursuing Innovation'.

The Trust has developed Trust-wide ethos values which are:

- Uncompromising Excellence
- Collaboration
- Community
- Integrity
- Equity

In line with our Trust values we believe in the following:

#### Staff rights to

- Work in an atmosphere of mutual respect
- Be treated fairly
- Be listened to and for views to be respected
- Be valued for the efforts and strengths of the work undertaken and to receive support for those areas that need developing
- Work in a clean, safe, secure, unthreatening stimulating and well organised work place
- Be kept appropriately informed through open channels of communication and collaboration
- Have a workload that is conducive to work-life balance

#### Staff Responsibilities to

- Put children at the centre of all that we do
- Separate personal and professional lives by creating clearly defined boundaries
- Challenge prejudice in the workplace and support colleagues of all social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Listen to and respect the opinions of others

- Support the development of others
- Promote positive relationships with pupils and the local community
- Safeguard the emotional and physical well-being of pupils
- Arrive on time for events/activities appropriately dressed
- Switch mobile phones off during teaching time and staff meetings
- Raise concerns in a non-threatening manner before they become a more serious problem
- Take responsibility for the working environment leaving it as others would wish to find it
- Challenge unprofessional behaviour in an appropriate manner

The Trust will:

- Wherever possible provide high quality CPD for all staff
- Ensure appropriate performance management procedures are in effect
- Value staff achievements and support their further development
- Treat the workforce both fairly and consistently
- Ensure the environment is clean, and that resources are well maintained and accessible
- Listen to the ideas and concerns of all staff
- Raise management concerns with staff appropriately
- Be aware of the requirement to ensure the work-life balance of staff
- Endeavour to make each and every working environment an enjoyable place to work.

Our values are further defined in our Trust culture deck which has been developed by our staff within our Trust.