

# Staff Code of Conduct

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## Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Updates
V12	August 2025	Human Resources	No Changes Made
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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all employees to follow.

Exceed Learning Partnership aims to provide an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this Code of Conduct are based on the Professional Standards of the Education and Training Foundation. We expect that all employees will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in these Standards.

All employees have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all employees, governors, contractors, visitors and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, leaders will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Academy, its school and its pupils. This should be read in conjunction with the Disciplinary Policy, Professional Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

Under regulation 7 of The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 we must also establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct and discipline of staff, which we have set out in part in this Code of Conduct, as well as other relevant policies which we refer to throughout this Code.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance, KCSIE, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

The Trust disciplinary policy aligns with this code of conduct. Failure to observe the standards in the code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action.

## 3. Staff of Code of Conduct

Employees should set an example to pupils, they will:

- Always act, and be seen to act, in the pupil's best interest
- Maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Treat pupils, staff and visitors with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in the Academy
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour



- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Act only within their delegated authority as set out within the Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Adhere to the Professional Standards
- Not conduct themselves in any way which might create doubt about their suitability to work for the Trust, or which has the potential to bring the Trust into disrepute or damage its reputation
- Not, either in their professional or personal capacity, use their position improperly to gain an advantage or disadvantage any person or organisation.

## 4. Safeguarding

All employees are responsible for safeguarding pupils and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect pupils from maltreatment, prevent impairment of pupils' health or development and ensure that pupils flourish in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all pupils to have the best outcomes.

All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified. To do this, employees must complete the assigned annual safeguarding training, have fully read and understood our child protection & safeguarding policies, as well as KCSIE. Employees must also be aware of our systems for keeping pupils safe and follow the guidance in these policies at all times.

All employees must cooperate with other employees and with external agencies where necessary.

Exceed Learning Partnership's safeguarding policies and procedures are available via each Academy Office, the National College Platform and Secondary colleagues will also be directed to Policies on the Induction Online Padlet.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working for or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with our code of conduct; this could include inappropriate behaviour outside of work. Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns to the Principal/DSL/HR/or CEO as soon as is reasonably possible. Further details can be found in the Low-Level Concern Policy.

The guidance for safer working practice for people who work with Children and young people is included in the Appendix of this Policy.

## 5. Declaration of Interest

By declaring interests, employees help maintain public confidence, avoid suspicion of impropriety and protect themselves against allegations of wrongdoing. Declarations must be made no matter how remote the interest is or if it is considered by the employee to be insignificant. All employees will be requested to make an annual declaration of interest and must advise the Principal / CEO if there are any changes to this declaration during the year.

Further details of required declarations can be located in the Conflict-of-Interest policy.



## 6. Pupil-Staff relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of Academy hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

Whilst we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the Academy year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

For staff who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent / carer, or any other person associated with their Academy, we expect that they identify this to the relevant Principal / HR.

For staff who have a family relationship with a pupil within the academy that they work we expect that they identify this to the relevant Principal/HR and retain a professional relationship at all times.

## 7. Communication and Social Media

The Trust uses a variety of methods to communicate with its employees, pupils, service users and the community and to deliver services, including external and internal post and telephones, photocopying and printing, email, internet, or social media. These facilities are provided for Exceed Learning Partnership business purposes only.

Employees must abide by Trust policies and procedures relating to the security of information, data protection and use of electronic media, including email and the internet.

Employees receiving inappropriate communications or material should seek advice from the Principal, HR or their line manager immediately. Employees who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy should also seek advice.

Employees are not permitted to discuss issues with the press or public or disclose information or documents on Exceed Learning Partnership business unless expressly authorised to do so by the CEO or the Chair of Governors/Directors. Unless authorised to do so, employees must not speak, write or give interviews to the media. If approached by the media, employees should refer the enquiry to the Principal / Headteacher/CEO. Local Stewards of the recognised trade unions have specific permission to liaise with the media on behalf of their respective trade unions.



Employee's social media profiles should not be accessible to pupils and parents/ carers. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, it is strongly recommended they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set profiles to private.

Whether at work or not, employees must not use social media to:

- Post information which is confidential or which constitutes intellectual property;
- Make negative comments, like negative posts about the Trust, its services, employees or anyone linked to the Trust;
- Harass or bully other employees (cyber bullying);
- Make discriminatory comments of any kind about anyone linked to the Trust;
- Post pictures or details of pupils or colleagues without express permission.
- Communicate with pupils or parents.
- Contact a Pupil

Staff should be aware of the Trust Online Safety Policy.

## 8. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in the Academy to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or Academy equipment for personal use during contact hours or in front of pupils.

Emails may be added to personal devices, but must be accessed via the relevant email app that the school uses e.g. outlook or Gmail. You must ensure that these are deleted when you leave the trust.

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment.

The Trust has the right to monitor e-mails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally, in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, to ensure proper and effective use of systems. Communication systems may be accessed when the Trust suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity.

## 9. Dignity at work

Exceed Learning Partnership aims to provide an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect and are valued for their skills and abilities. We are firmly opposed to all forms of harassment and bullying at work. We will promote a positive working environment, dealing with any instances of bullying and harassment in line with the grievance and disciplinary policies as required in a fair and consistent way.

Unreasonable behaviour can take many forms and can range from physical attack to a subtle comment. It can also include actions, jokes or suggestions that might create a stressful working environment or the production, distribution, display of material that may give rise to offence. It can also include behaviour which deliberately or inadvertently excludes individuals from normal activities.

Employees should:



- Treat their colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Not harass or bully any other member of staff. Employees should discourage any such behaviours
- Support colleagues who are being bullied or harassed
- Follow and adhere to the Trust Dignity at Work Policy.

## 10. Health and Safety

Employees must adhere to the Trust Health and Safety Policy, procedure and guidance, and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the Academy environment safe and well.

Risk assessments must be in place for all activities, both on and off site, involving children and young people.

## 11. Use of Trust Premises and Equipment

Trust equipment and premises are available only for trust-related activities and should not be used in relation to another job or for excessive personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the Principal/CEO.

Illegal, inappropriate (excessive or regular personal use) or unacceptable use of trust equipment/communication systems may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to an employee's dismissal.

At all times, colleagues must respect the estate and look after the environment that they are working/teaching within, in line with teaching standards and this code of conduct.

Any defects or damages must be reported by colleagues to the Site Manager and Business Manager where required.

## 12. Use of Alcohol and Drugs

The taking or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Alcohol, drugs or substances consumed outside of or during working hours must not affect a worker's ability to do their job or have the potential to damage the Trust's reputation or the worker's own credibility. Presenting for work with clothing or breath smelling of alcohol or drugs is likely to raise reputational concerns that may lead to disciplinary action. Whilst some narcotics are legal as are prescription drugs, they have potential to have inhibiting effects. Employees are required to take reasonable care of themselves and others who could be affected by what they do. And therefore, could be liable of health and safety breach if their alcohol consumption or drug-taking (whether legal or illegal) put theirs or others safety at risk.

With the exception of work-related events, where provision of alcohol has been authorised, alcohol must not be consumed during working hours.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the Academy has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action.

Employees who suspect a colleague of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at work must report this to their line manager, or to a more senior manager, if it is their line manager under suspicion.



The Trust operates a no smoking policy within its premises and boundaries; this encompasses both tobacco and electronic smoking.

## 13. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, all employees, Directors and the Governing bodies are exposed to a significant volume of data and information. Much of this information is deemed special category personal data and is subject to special conditions under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) there is an obligation for staff to attend training and to observe the requirements of General Data Protection Requirement (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Staff should follow the Confidentiality Policy when dealing with any personal data.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Staff should follow the Trust Data Protection and Data Retention Policies at all times.

## 14. Honesty and Integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using Academy property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Further details are found within the Anti – Bribery and Fraud Policy. Staff are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance of any gift or hospitality. Further details can be found in the Gifts and Hospitality policy.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the Academy is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

Staff should declare any financial or non-financial interests that may cause any conflict with the Trust's interests.

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the Academy, the member of staff will advise the Academy as soon as reasonably practicable. Staff must inform the Principal/CEO immediately if they are the subject of a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.



Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

Failure to make a relevant declaration is a very serious breach of trust and therefore, if staff are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to take advice from HR.

## 15. Additional work

Off duty hours are the personal concern of individual employees but they should not allow their private interests to take priority over their work interest. Employees should not put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests' conflict. Private interests in this regard include activities of a voluntary nature as well as business or recreational interests. This does not preclude tuition outside working hours. Declaration form for business interests and personal interests should be completed and approved especially in contravention of main role.

It is not the intention of the Trust to prevent employees from undertaking additional employment unless that employment conflicts with or detrimentally affects the Trust's interests, weakens public confidence in the conduct of the Trust's business, or affects an employee's ability to undertake their work. Secondary employment should be declared to the Trust.

An employee who wishes to take on any kind of additional paid or unpaid work, in any capacity, must ensure that:

- Where there is a potential conflict of interest of the Trust they inform their Principal/Head teacher/CEO in writing for assessment.
- The combined working arrangements do not exceed the provisions of the working time regulations for weekly working hours, allow for the daily and weekly rest required by working time regulations or cause other concern in terms of health and safety at work.
- The work does not place them in a position where their Trust duties and private interests' conflict.
- The work does not damage public confidence in the Trust's conduct or business.
- The work does not involve being in direct competition with the Trust for contracts/work.
- Any potential employer is made aware that they are already employed by the Trust.

## 16. Physical contact and intimate/personal care

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil. Contact should be relevant to their age / understanding and staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil. Guidance and protocols around safe and appropriate physical contact may be provided, for example, by sports governing bodies and should be understood and applied consistently. Any incidents of physical contact that cause concern or fall outside of these protocols and guidance should be reported to the Principal/Headteacher.



Pupils should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the pupil's intimate care plan specifies the reason for this.

A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned.

## 17. Dress Code

All Staff will dress in a professional manner, appropriate to their role. Outfits will not be overly revealing. Expectations for staff in different roles are detailed below:

<b>Teaching and Support Staff</b>	
Trousers	Smart trousers, no denim style trousers or leggings
Skirts	Smart Skirts, of an appropriate length in line with day to day role and responsibilities
Shirts/tops	Not tight fitting or revealing, no vest style tops, ties where appropriate
Footwear	No open sandals or flip flops
Jewellery	Modest and appropriate in relation to daily tasks
Practical subjects	No clothing with political or offensive slogans
Clothing must be professional and relevant in line with the setting in which the colleague is working.  Teaching and Support Staff should liaise with the Academy Business Manager/Trust HR Department should they have any questions or queries regarding their work attire or expectations.	

<b>Premises and Site Staff</b>	
Trousers	Appropriate trousers to undertake the role
Skirts	No skirts are permitted
Shirts/tops	Uniform as provided by the Trust
Footwear	No open sandals or flip flops, footwear should be practical for tasks involved ensuring that any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn as required
Jewellery	Modest and appropriate in relation to daily tasks
Practical subjects	No clothing with political or offensive slogans
Clothing must be professional and relevant in line with the setting in which the colleague is working.  Premises and Site Staff should liaise with the Trust Facilities and Compliance Manager if they have any questions or queries regarding their work attire and expectations.	



## Tattoos and Body Art

The Trust recognises the importance of staff acting as professional role models for pupils and the wider school community. Staff are therefore expected to maintain a professional standard of appearance at all times.

The Trust adopts a **common-sense and proportionate approach** to tattoos and body art, balancing personal expression with the expectations of an educational environment.

**General Principle:** Tattoos should be discreet and not detract from a professional appearance. Staff may be asked to cover tattoos that are large, prominent, or otherwise considered inappropriate for a school setting.

**Prohibited Content:** Tattoos that are offensive, discriminatory, sexually explicit, graphic, or that depict or promote violence, extremism, or illegal activity must be covered at all times while at work or representing the Trust.

**Role-Specific Expectations:** Expectations regarding the visibility of tattoos may vary depending on:

- the nature of the role,
- the level of direct contact with pupils, and
- the age range of pupils taught.

**Local Application and Consistency:** The CEO, Deputy CEO and Principal of each Academy has discretion to determine what constitutes appropriate appearance within their specific school context, in line with this Code of Conduct, Trust values, and Trust-wide policies. Decisions will be applied consistently and proportionately.

## 18. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Academy, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including, but not limited to, relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as making or liking negative comments about the Academy on social media or other schools/academies within the Sector.

## 19. Links with other policies

This policy has links with our policies on:

- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Gift and Hospitality Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Fraud
- Finance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy



- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- Managing Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Use of Emails Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy



## Appendix

### **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Staff, Volunteers, Governors, who work with Children and Young People**

## **1. Introduction**

This guidance is intended to assist school within the trust to minimise the risk of staff and volunteers being accused of improper conduct towards the children and young people with whom they come into contact during their work. The subject must be covered in staff induction arrangements for all employees and volunteers.

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff relate to pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. Staff must exercise professional judgement in their dealings with pupils. For the vast majority of staff this code of conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If staff have any doubts about the advice contained in this document, they should consult their Principal/Headteacher.

Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance is designed to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

## **2. Reporting Child Abuse**

Child abuse may be physical, sexual or psychological. While child abusers may be relatives or friends of the family, some meet children in other contexts and a small minority of these may gain access to children in schools as teachers or support staff or through their voluntary involvement in school activities. Pupils and staff should not feel inhibited from reporting abuse by staff or volunteers, or any incident where a pupil has grounds to believe that a member of staff or volunteer has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour. Principals/Headteachers and staff will continue to do all they can to ensure that the environment within schools encourages pupils and staff to make truthful reports of any inappropriate behaviour.

### **2.1 Child Protection Procedures**

The action to be taken by staff when they suspect a pupil is being abused by a person outside or inside the school, and the steps that must by law be taken if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff by a pupil, are set out in the school's child protection procedure and all staff should be familiar with this.

### **2.2 Other procedures and guidance**

Staff should also be familiar with the school's policies about physical contact with pupils, the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, and the procedures that should be followed if a pupil needs first aid or medical attention.



## 3. Guidelines for Staff

### 3.1 Private meetings with pupils

- (a) Staff and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual pupils may give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting is necessary, but, where possible, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another pupil or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- (b) Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Principal/Headteacher.

### 3.2 Physical contact with pupils

- (a) Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general rule staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.
- (b) Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to touch as a means of communication. Permission should be sought from a child before physical contact is made.
- (c) Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unacceptable and not tolerated in any context.

### 3.3 Where physical contact may be acceptable.

- (a) There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present as normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, he/she should seek the advice of the Principal/Headteacher.
- (b) Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include showing a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment, demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Staff should be aware of the limits and boundaries within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.
- (c) There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain or remove a pupil physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil, he/she should make a written report of the incident in the form prescribed by the school's policy



on restraint. Physical restraint is a last resort, in the first instance staff should seek support from a more senior member of staff and seek to de-escalate the situation.

### **3.4 Caring for pupils with particular problems.**

- (a) Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.
- (b) Wherever possible staff who have to help children with intimate care routines must be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

### **3.5 Relationships and attitudes**

- (a) All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and pupils will be regarded as breach of trust, and any sexual activity between a member of staff and a pupil under 18 years of age may be a criminal offence.
- (b) All staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupils and take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff of either gender are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- (c) Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff must not respond but address the situation with their Principal/ Headteacher.
- (d) From time-to-time staff may encounter pupils who display attention seeking behaviour. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the member of staff should also ensure that the Principal/ Headteacher or a senior colleague is made aware of the situation.
- (e) Staff should never give their personal details such as home or personal mobile phone number, home or personal e-mail address to pupils.

### **3.6 Where conversation of a sensitive nature may be appropriate.**

- (a) Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.
- (b) Other staff in school may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. Pupils may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases staff must judge



whether it is appropriate for them to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular pupil.

### **3.7 Inappropriate comments and discussions with pupils**

- (a) As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore, staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time, it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.
- (b) Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is also unacceptable, as is humiliating pupils, any such acts may be treated as gross misconduct.
- (c) The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language of sexual behaviour must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There should always be a clear link with the targets of the teacher's programme.

### **3.8 Extra-curricular activities**

- (a) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra-curricular activities, or a residential setting such as a residential trip or outdoor education camp or extended visit away from home. Typically, a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation. Although a more informal approach is usual in such circumstances, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school or within normal school hours.
- (b) Staff should take care in receiving or giving gifts to pupils which could be misunderstood. Gifts to individual pupils from staff will be exceptional and should be assessed against the school's policy or by a senior member of staff. Inappropriate gifts from pupils should be reported to the Principal/Headteacher.

### **3.9 On-line communication and social forums**

- (a) While it is recognised that the use of e-mail as an agreed medium for the submission of work, advice over aspects of subjects being covered or other professional matters can be beneficial, it is essential that this is done safely and in a way that complies with school policy on e-safety and acceptable use.
- (b) Staff should keep passwords secure and ensure that no other person can gain access to their e-mail account and maliciously send messages, which appear to have been written by them.
- (c) Staff should only ever communicate with pupils using an e-mail address provided as part of the Academy Trust internet service, even if they are sending messages from home. These services can be monitored and provide a measure of protection for both parties.
- (d) The increased availability of internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging and social networking sites also pose risks for children and staff. While they are popular among young people and offer many positive experiences, there is widespread concern about their potential abuse. The school's



policy is that members of staff are prohibited from using internet 'chat rooms', instant messaging or social networking sites such as X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat, to communicate with pupils. It is advised that any member of staff with a social networking site should ensure that it is appropriately secured and satisfy themselves that pupils and parents of the school can not access this.

- (d) All use of the internet, e-mail or any other digital or electronic equipment within school must be in line with the relevant school policies on Acceptable Use and e-Safety.

### **3.10 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism**

- (a) The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.
- (b) It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the adult has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with the senior manager and/or parent or carer and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.
- (c) Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.
- (d) Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
- (e) There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g., on special occasions or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.



## 4. Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

### 4.1 Sharing Concerns.

It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and Governor within the school to report any concerns they may have that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Any concerns should be reported immediately to your designated member of staff, Principal/Headteacher or local social care office.

### 4.2 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. If a member of staff does not feel able to report concerns to a senior member of the school staff, then they can contact the Trust or relevant external agency to report concerns.

### 4.3 Reporting Incidents

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued he/she should discuss the matter with the Principal/Headteacher/DSL as soon as possible. Where it is agreed with the Principal/Headteacher the member of staff or volunteer should provide a written report of the incident. A detailed written report should always be made if a member of staff had been obliged to restrain a pupil physically, or where a complaint has been made by a pupil, parent or other adult.

**Policy Agreed: March 2026**

**Signed Chief Executive:**

**Signed: Chair of Directors:**

**Policy to be reviewed in September 2026**