

Policy C3 Staff Code of Conduct

1. Statement of purpose

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance on the minimum expected standards of behaviour that all Trust staff, volunteers (including Trustees and Local Board members), contractors and staff supplied by a third party, should observe. These groups are referred to hereinafter as staff.
- 1.2 The Trust aims to create a culture which proactively prioritises the safeguarding and health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils; creates a working environment and culture that is positive, supportive and inclusive; and in turn facilitates the safety, happiness and attainment of pupils: Staff have an individual responsibility to prioritise the safeguarding and wellbeing of both pupils and colleagues.
- 1.3 All staff are expected to act with personal and professional integrity at all times, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.
- 1.4 Many of the principles in this Code of Conduct are based on statutory obligations within the [Teachers' Standards](#). The Trust expects that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.
- 1.5 Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. Other responsibilities expected of staff and volunteers are set out in other [Trust policies](#), as appropriate. Staff and volunteers are expected to be aware of and follow Trust policies and to complete mandatory training, including refresher training, on a timely basis.
- 1.6 If situations arise that are not covered by this Code of Conduct, staff and volunteers will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, academy or Professional Services department and its pupils¹ and colleagues.

2. Legislation and guidance

- 2.1 In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance (i.e. [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)), the Trust is required to have a staff code of conduct or staff behaviour policy, which should cover acceptable use of technologies including use of mobile devices, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.
- 2.2 This Code complies with the Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. General obligations

- 3.1 The Trust's values are the key things all staff should live by through our roles as staff and volunteers, i.e:
 - Achieving Ambitions
 - Working Together
 - Delivering Excellence
 - Nurturing Potential

¹ The Trust recognises that staff will have legitimate relationships with pupils who are family members or members of family of close friends which will fall outside of the restrictions of this Code and such issues can be raised with line managers.

- 3.2 Our staff and volunteers are expected to consistently model behaviour that set a positive example within our Trust community and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.
- 3.3 Failure to follow the Staff Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our Staff Disciplinary policy. Sanctions include, but are not limited to, dismissal.

4. Safeguarding

- 4.1 Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children. All staff have a responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.
- 4.2 Academy based staff will familiarise themselves with their academy Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures. They must know who the academy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies are. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures will be shared with all staff on induction and are available on the academy webpages. Regular training updates will also be shared with all staff. All staff are required to actively engage in professional development opportunities
- 4.3 All staff who have contact with pupils should read and demonstrate understanding of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#) Part 1 and Annex B. All staff who do not have contact with children (e.g. Professional Services departments) should read and demonstrate understanding of Annex A. DSLs, Deputy DSLs and Senior Leaders must further read and understand all additional sections of KCSIE 2022.
- 4.4 All staff must ensure that they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Information will be available on team member noticeboards, academy websites and via electronic libraries. Staff working with children must maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately and raise concerns with the DSL (or deputy) in line with the Academy Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 4.5 All staff must fulfil the Prevent Duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation. Prevent training should be undertaken every 2 years. All staff have a duty to report suspected Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases to the DSL. All staff must report known FGM acts to the police.
- 4.6 All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse). It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is essential that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. Staff must challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers (whether children or adults); our Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never accepted and will not be tolerated.
- 4.7 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**
- 4.8 The Trust has an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of an academy are dealt with appropriately to safeguard children. All allegations in relation to staff, supply teachers, contractor or volunteers must be reported to the Principal or Head of Department within the Professional Services Teams. Where applicable the DSL or Principal will raise concerns and seek further advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to agree a course of action.
- 4.9 This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, has:

- o Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- o Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- o Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- o Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

4.10 The Trust will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

4.11 Low-level concerns about adults

4.12 A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- o Being over-friendly with children
- o Having favourites
- o Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- o Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- o Humiliating pupils

4.13 Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work. All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and guidance on low-level concerns. The Trust also encourages staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, they are encouraged to report it to the Principal or designated person.

4.14 All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way. Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage. This creates and embeds a culture of openness and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

5. Whistleblowing

5.1 In instances where safeguarding concerns raised through the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures have not been responded to through normal processes, staff should raise concerns through the [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

5.2 Whistleblowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- o Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- o Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- o Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

5.3 Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

5.4 Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistleblowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

6. Staff/pupil relationships

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child is unacceptable. It is an offence under section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child under 18 years of age, even if the relationship is consensual. Sexual activity with a child will be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.
- 6.3 Children are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions depending on their age and understanding. This includes the prohibition of sexual activity with children by adults in a position of trust even if that relationship is consensual.
- 6.4 If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:
- o This takes place in a public place that others can access
 - o Others can see into the room
 - o A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place
- 6.5 Staff should normally not have one-to-one contact with pupils outside of school hours / academy activities. It is recognised that this may occur through mutual membership of social groups; family connections; activities such as tutoring; or involvement as a volunteer (e.g. Scouts, Girlguiding, etc.). Staff should not assume the academy is aware of such connections and should declare any such relationships to their line manager or Principal.
- 6.6 Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.
- 6.7 While the Trust is aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the academic year, gifts from individual staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.
- 6.8 If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, this should be reported at the earliest opportunity to their line manager or the Principal.

7. Communication and media (including social media)

- 7.1 All staff members should be aware of, and follow, the Trust-wide Social Media policy.
- 7.2 All staff members should be aware of, and follow, the Trust-wide consent process when using photos of children for internal and external use.
- 7.3 All staff are not permitted to deal with local, regional, or national media companies unless prior agreement (in writing) has been given by the Head of Marketing and Communications.
- 7.4 Local, regional, or national media companies are not permitted on any academy / office site unless prior agreement (in writing) has been given by the Head of Marketing and Communications.

8. Acceptable use of technology

- 8.1 There is an expectation that staff will be responsible users whilst using ICT systems within the workplace. This includes protecting pupils and staff from obscene and / or inappropriate material as well as ensuring that the use of technology is supportive of staff' professional and safeguarding responsibilities.

8.2 To achieve this, staff will need to keep up to date on how to maintain safety when using technology by completing mandatory cyber security training, as well as any other relevant ICT training required as part of their role.

8.3 The ICT Acceptable Use Policy, with details the requirements of staff when using technology in the workplace, including safe and responsible use of equipment.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 In the course of their role, staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, their academy or Professional Services department, staff, pupils and their parents or carers which will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection policy.

9.2 This does not override staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

10. Honesty and integrity

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

11. Dress and appearance

11.1 The Trust recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. Staff should dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role as a professional and that promotes a professional image. Staff will also ensure that their dress, including any jewellery or piercings is safe and appropriate for their working environment.

12. Conduct outside of work

12.1 Staff will not act in a way that would bring our sponsor, the University of Brighton, the Trust, academy or Professional Services department, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the University of Brighton, the Trust, academy or Professional Services department, or the teaching profession in the media (including social media).

13. Links with other policies

13.1 In particular, this policy links with our policies and guidance on:

- Staff Disciplinary
- Staff Grievance
- Child Protection and Safeguarding (see academy website)
- Gifts and hospitality
- Online Safety (see academy website)
- Use of Social Media
- ICT Acceptable Use
- Whistleblowing
- Physical Contact
- Intimate Care
- Lone Working
- Photography and Image Sharing (see academy website)

- Remote Learning Guidance (see academy website)
- Data Protection
- Guidance on Low Level Concerns

12. Policy status and review

Written by:	Head of Governance and Admissions Updated by Head of People (02.2021) Updated by Head of People (07.21)
Owner:	Head of People
Status:	V2 = Approved V2a = Approved V2b = Approved V3 = Approved V4 = Approved V5 = Approved V6 = Approved
Approval date:	V2 = R&HR 1-3-18 JCC comments incorporated 5-6-18 V2a = 4-10-18 Exec Team V2b = 21-05-19 Exec Team V2c = 04-06-2020 Editorial change to 4.4 V3 = 22.09.2020 Chair of R&HR V4 = 09.02.2021 Chair of R&HR (JCC 03.02.21) V5 = 04.10.2021 (RHR) V6 = 12.08.2022 (Chair of RHR Committee) (JCC Consultation to be confirmed – 10.22)
Review Date:	July 2023