



Code of Conduct Policy

Board Approved Date	February 2026
Version	1.3
Author Initials	MS/MC
Review Date	February 2027

(This policy supersedes all previous Code of Conduct policies)

Amendments

Policy Date	New Version Number	Summary of change	Comments
15/02/2019	1.0	No changes made	
27/01/2021	1.1	No changes made	
20/03/2023	1.2	Minor changes made	
30/01/2026	1.3	Minor changes made	

Union Consultation

Date	Action (meeting, email etc)	Comments	Attendance
10/07/17	Meeting with Union Reps		UNISON, GMB, NASUWT, ATL, NUT

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of this Code of Conduct is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all individuals working for, on behalf of, or representing the Trust, and to provide further information on expected behaviours. This includes employees, agency workers, volunteers, contractors, Trustees, Members, and Local Governors. This Code should be read in conjunction with the Trust's disciplinary procedure (where applicable), Teachers' Standards and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE – latest edition).
- 1.2 This Code should make it clear to individuals the expectations the Trust has of them. It is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and individuals must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any individual is unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance, they should speak to their line manager, Chair of Governors, Trust Executive Lead, or the Trust HR / Governance Team as appropriate.
- 1.3 The policy has been implemented following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions, and approved by the Trust Board.
- 1.4 This policy is contractual and forms part of any employee's contract of employment where applicable, except where inconsistent with existing contractual terms for staff who transferred under TUPE. For Trustees, Members, Governors, volunteers and contractors, this Code forms part of the Trust's governance and assurance framework and is enforceable through the Trust's governance, contractual or removal processes.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Code applies to all individuals associated with the Trust, including employees (regardless of length of service), agency workers, volunteers, Trustees, Members, Local Governors and self-employed contractors, insofar as it is relevant to their role.
- 2.2 Breaches of this Code by employees will normally be managed under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Breaches by Trustees, Members or Governors will be managed in accordance with the Trust's governance procedures, Scheme of Delegation, Articles of Association, and, where relevant, the Academy Trust Handbook.
- 2.3 As recognisable figures in the local community, the behaviour and conduct of individuals associated with the Trust outside of work or formal duties can impact on the Trust's reputation and effectiveness. Therefore, conduct outside formal duties may be addressed where it is relevant to the individual's role or position of trust.
- 2.4 As a Multi-Academy Trust, this Code applies consistently across all academies and central services. References to 'line manager' or 'school leader' should be read as including Trust Executive Leaders, Chairs of Governors, or Trustees, where appropriate.

3. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

- 3.1 Employees must have fully read and understood our safeguarding and child protection policies, be aware of our systems for keeping children safe and must always follow the guidance in these policies.
- 3.2 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.
- 3.3 Staff must be aware of and comply with the Trust's low-level concerns policy and are required to report concerns about the behaviour of adults, including concerns that do not meet the threshold for harm, in accordance with Trust procedures.
- 3.4 Safeguarding concerns may arise from conduct in person or online, including through the use of social media, messaging platforms, remote learning tools, or other digital technologies.

4. Duty of care

Staff must:

- 4.1 Understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions may be applied if these responsibilities are not undertaken with reasonable care
- 4.2 Always act, and be seen to act, in students' best interests
- 4.3 Avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- 4.4 Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

5. Health & Safety

All employees must ensure that they:

- 5.1 Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- 5.2 Comply with Health and Safety Regulations or instructions and use any safety equipment and protective clothing supplied by the Trust
- 5.3 Comply with hygiene and accident reporting requirements
- 5.4 Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any member of the Trust community or visitors
- 5.5 Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere to support compliance with the Working Time Regulations

6. Honesty and personal integrity

- 6.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. This includes maintaining appropriate attendance, and punctuality, treating colleagues with respect and professionalism, and having proper regard for the Trust's ethos, policies and practices.
- 6.2 Employees must comply with any lawful and reasonable instructions issued by managers, school leaders, Trustees or Local Governors.6.3 Employees uphold public trust in the Trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside the workplace, by:
 - Not misusing, damaging, removing or allowing improper use of Trust property or resources
 - Treating students with dignity and respect and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries
 - Safeguarding students' wellbeing in accordance with statutory guidance
 - Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - Not undermining fundamental British valuesEnsuring personal beliefs are not expressed in ways that exploit students' vulnerability or encourage unlawful behaviour

7. Tackling discrimination

- 7.1 Employees are required to understand discrimination, bullying and harassment and must comply with the Trust's policies, including, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies.
- 7.2 Employees must not ignore or condone discrimination, including inappropriate language, jokes or 'banter', and must actively promote inclusion.

8. Professional boundaries and relationships

- 8.1 Employees are in a position of trust in relation to students. It is a criminal offence for a person aged 18 or over in a position of trust to engage in a sexual relationship with a student under their care, including where the student is over 18.
- 8.2 Employees must avoid behaviour or communication that could be misinterpreted, including online communication.
- 8.3 Sexualised behaviour, comments or discussions with or in the presence of students are unacceptable and unlawful.
- 8.4 Employees must maintain professional boundaries at all times and must not show favouritism or form inappropriate relationships.
- 8.5 Where staff become aware of a student infatuation or boundary concern, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The details of the DSL can be found [LOCATION/NAME OF POLICY].

9. Confidentiality and protection of data

- 9.1 Staff may have access to confidential and sensitive information relating to students, staff or Trust business and must not misuse or improperly disclose such information.
- 9.2 Where uncertainty exists about disclosure, advice must be sought from senior leadership or the Trust Executive Team.
- 9.3 The Trust processes personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, Data Protection Act 1998. Employees must comply with all Trust data protection, IT and information security policies.
- 9.4 Any actual or suspected data breach, loss or misuse of information must be reported immediately in line with Trust procedures.

10. Physical contact with students

- 10.1 Appropriate physical contact may be necessary and must be proportionate, time-limited and appropriate to the student's age, needs and context.
- 10.2 Any physical contact for comfort or reassurance must be capable of justification and, where appropriate, reported to the DSL.
- 10.3 Physical intervention may be used only in accordance with the law and Trust policy.
- 10.4 Sexual contact or grooming behaviour is unlawful and unacceptable.

11. Social contact and online communication with students

- 11.1 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social relationships with students, including via social media or messaging platforms, outside of professional purposes.
- 11.2 Staff should not connect with students on personal social media accounts and must use Trust-approved systems for professional communication.
- 11.3 Staff must exercise professional judgement when encountering students outside school and report any contact that could be misinterpreted.

12. Working one-to-one with students

12.1 One-to-one working is permitted but presents additional risk. Staff must:

- Avoid secluded locations
- Ensure visibility into rooms where possible
- Inform colleagues or managers in advance where practicable
- Report concerns immediately

13. Dress and appearance

13.1 Staff are role models and must dress in a professional, appropriate and respectful manner.

14. Gifts and hospitality

14.1 Gifts or hospitality exceeding **£15** must be declared and approved. Gifts exceeding **£30** must be declared to the school leader.

14.2 Staff must not accept gifts or hospitality that could be perceived as inducements.⁴

14.3 Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice in line with the Trust's behaviour policy.

15. Keeping within the law

15.1 Unlawful or criminal behaviour inside or outside work may lead to disciplinary action.

15.2 Staff must inform the Headteacher or Trust Executive immediately if they are investigated, charged or convicted of a criminal offence that may impact their suitability to work with children or in a position of trust.

16. Conduct outside of work and at work-related functions

16.1 Staff conduct outside work may impact on Trust reputation and suitability for employment.

16.2 Staff must act responsibly at work-related events and social functions.

17. Whistleblowing and protected disclosures

17.1 Staff are encouraged to raise concerns about wrongdoing, safeguarding, financial impropriety or governance in accordance with the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

17.2 Staff who make protected disclosures in the public interest will be supported and protected from detriment in line with legislation.

18. Review of policy

18.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance or Trust operations.