



**W A T E R T O N**  
ACADEMY TRUST®



# Code of Conduct for Employees

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## **1. Scope of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of Waterton Academy Trust. Where this code refers to employees, it should be assumed that this means any person acting as a representative of the organisation e.g. volunteer/PTA member. A separate Code of Conduct is available for Governors and Parents. This Code is aimed at ensuring such employees and volunteers are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them by The Trust and the Governing Body.

## **2. Introduction**

- a. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work in a multi academy trust.
- b. Waterton Academy Trust is committed to ensuring children and young people are supported and safe. The Trust has a commitment to the safeguarding of children and young people and promoting their welfare and expects all employees to share this commitment.
- c. The Head teacher of each academy and the Chief Officer of each central department will ensure that this Code is followed by employees and will deal with any breaches of this Code within their academy/department with the support of HR and/or the CEO as appropriate. The CEO will ensure that this code is followed by Headteachers and Chief Officers with the support of HR and/or the Trust Board as appropriate.
  - d. Failure to follow the standards set out in this Code may be regarded as serious and any breach could lead to disciplinary action being taken against an employee under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Any disciplinary action may be considered as appropriate in the circumstances of a breach, up to and including summary dismissal.
- e. The Trust recognise that some employees will be required to work to their own professional code(s) of conduct when carrying out their duties. In exceptional circumstances there could be a conflict between this Code and the requirements of a professional code of conduct. In such circumstances employees must discuss the conflict with the Head teacher/CEO before taking any action(s) which could be contrary to this Code.

## **3. Core Values, Conduct and Standards**

This Code reflects the Trust's core values and behavioural expectations of employees, which are as follows:

### **3.1 Core values**

#### **a. Respect for All**

It is an expectation that all employees, volunteers and visitors model courteous and respectful behaviour to the children through all aspects of their conduct including their appearance. This includes the way which adults talk to the children as well as each other.

Every employee will be polite and supportive to each other. Everyone's contributions will be valued and employees will listen to others and be sensitive to their position.

#### **b. Ambition**

Every employee will set high standards and aim to continually improve. Feedback on performance will be sought and acted upon and employees will be encouraged to put forward new ideas to support further improvements to those areas that require development

#### **c. Integrity**

Every employee will, in acting as an ambassador for the Trust maintain high standards of personal conduct demonstrated through an honest, open, impartial and tolerant approach when dealing with pupils, colleagues, members of the public and other stakeholders.

### **3.2 Standards**

- a. Employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the community which the academy serves. Employees are expected to make the appropriate level of management aware of any deficiency in the provision of service. This will be through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination.
- b. Employees must be aware of relevant Trust and professional standards and ensure they apply these standards when dealing with pupils, parents and other members of the community that the Trust/school serves.
- c. It is the duty of each employee to report to an appropriate senior member of staff any impropriety, breach of procedure, unlawfulness or maladministration.
- d. Employees must be aware of the Whistleblowing Code of Practice which gives support and protection for any employee who reports any wrongdoing,

including impropriety, breach of procedure, unlawfulness or maladministration.

#### **4. Disclosure of Information**

- a. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government services, pupils and the public. The Trust may decide to be open about other types of information. Employees must be aware of which information the Trust are not open about, and act accordingly. If an employee is not sure they should ask for guidance from their Head teacher or the CEO.
- b. Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor must they pass it on to others who might use this information in such a way. Any personal information received by an employee, which does not belong to the Trust should not be divulged by the employee without prior approval, except where disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.
- c. Employees must adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 in line with GDPR at all times and specifically not disclose personal information about other employees, or a member of the public, including pupils and parents, to a third party without their agreement to do so (unless exempt under the Act). Any employee who leaves employment with the Trust is expected to continue to act in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **5. Political Neutrality**

- a. Employees have a responsibility to respect the individual rights of all stakeholders of the Trust.
- b. Where employees are required to advise, they must do so in ways which meet the corporate objectives of the Trust, and which are balanced to reflect their political neutrality.
- c. Employees, regardless of political restrictions, must follow every policy the Trust/academy has adopted and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work. Please also refer to paragraph 12c of this Code.

## **4. Relationships, Employment and Other Employee Matters**

### **6.1 Relationships**

For the purpose of this section, a personal relationship includes, but is not limited to:

- a personal friend or mentee / mentor or similar;
- a former / current business associate;
- a current or previous non co-habiting partner, partner by marriage, civil partnership, or co-habiting arrangement;
- immediate family members including those not related through blood; extended family members including those not related through blood;

#### **a. Trust Directors/Members**

Employees are responsible to the Trust through their Head teacher and ASC. The role of some employees is to give advice to Trustees, Members and Governors.

Where a Trustee/Member/Governor is a member of an employee's family, immediate or extended including those not related by blood, employees must inform the Head teacher/CEO/Chief Officer and Governance Officer of this personal relationship. The most appropriate arrangements regarding that employee's professional relationship with the Trustee/Member/Governor will be determined.

#### **b. The local community**

Employees must always remember their responsibilities to pupils and the community that the academy serves and must at all times ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the Trust and the academy.

### **c. Pupils**

Where a pupil is a member of an employee's family, immediate or extended including those not related through blood, employees must inform the Head teacher/CEO/Chief Officer of this personal relationship. The most appropriate arrangements regarding that employee's professional relationship with the pupil will then be determined.

### **d. Contractors**

Employees must inform the Head teacher/CEO/Chief Officer of all personal relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential external contractors. The most appropriate arrangements regarding that employee's professional relationship with the contractor or potential contractor will be determined. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition, against other tenders. Special favours must not be shown in the tendering process to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives of employees. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

Employees who engage with, supervise or have any professional relationship with external contractors, or potential external contractors, and have previously had or currently have a personal relationship with that contractor must declare that relationship to the Head teacher/CEO/Chief Officer. The most appropriate arrangements regarding that employee's professional relationship with the contractor or potential contractor will be determined

### **e. Other employees**

Employees must declare any personal relationship with other employees of the Trust and/or academy to the Head teacher/CEO to enable early consideration about whether such a relationship could cause, or be perceived to cause a conflict of interest. Should a conflict of interest be identified, there may be a need to consider the possibility of alternative employment or a change of duties.

Employees must treat colleagues with courtesy and respect. Verbal or physical abuse, bullying and insubordination to colleagues will not be tolerated.

### **f. School governors**

Where a School Governor, including the Chair of Governors, is a member of an employee's family, immediate or extended including those not related by blood, employees must inform the Head teacher of this personal relationship. The Head teacher will then determine the most appropriate arrangements regarding that employee's professional relationship with School Governors.

**g. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) / Office for Standards in Education Inspectorate (Ofsted)**

Employees, who are in a personal relationship with any member of the HMIE / Ofsted Inspectorate, must declare a conflict of interest if that person is involved in an audit or inspection of the academy within which they are employed.

**6.2 Appointment and other employment matters**

- a. All employees involved in the appointment of staff must make sure that appointments are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the role. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in an appointment where they have a personal relationship with an applicant.
- b. Similarly, employees must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee with whom they are in a personal relationship.



## 7. Outside Commitments

- a. Support staff employed on NJC Terms and Conditions above NJC Grade 7 are required to obtain written consent from the Head teacher/CEO to take any additional employment and/or unpaid / voluntary work and/or self-employment such as consultancy work.
- b. Employees, regardless of grade and/or position, should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take any additional employment and/or unpaid / voluntary work and/or self-employment which conflicts with the Trust's interests.
- c. Employees taking additional employment and/or unpaid / voluntary work and / or self-employment must ensure that the total number of hours worked in a week is not, or is not perceived to be, a risk to their own or their colleagues' health and safety. Specifically, the Trust expects employees to notify the Head teacher/CEO of any additional employment and/or self-employment which may result in their total working time going above an average of 48 hours a week. The Head teacher will notify HR of such additional employment and/or unpaid / voluntary work and/or self-employment.
- d. An employee's declaration of additional employment does not remove the right of the Trust to take action against any employee if that additional employment and/or unpaid / voluntary work and/or self-employment is deemed to be, or has been, detrimental to the Trust's interests or reputation or where it affects the employee's work performance.
- e. The use of Trust and/or academy employees and resources, (e.g. computers, telephone, photocopier, etc.) for non-work related purposes is forbidden unless appropriate arrangements are made and approval is given by the CEO or Head teacher of the academy. Communication relating to additional employment is not permitted during contractual hours.
- f. Employees must follow the Trust's rules on ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during the course of their employment. Intellectual property is a generic term that includes inventions and patents, creative writing and drawing, teaching materials including handouts, PowerPoint presentations on-line resources etc and pupils work including progress and achievement records. Intellectual property and copyright are the sole and exclusive property of the Trust . Employees are advised to consult with the Head teacher or CEO if they have any doubts as to whether their materials are exempt from these provisions prior to their leaving the Trust..
- g. Employees are sometimes requested to give presentations/advice using their professional skills and expertise, for organisations other than the Trust and/or

the academy. If the work is done as an official work duty, the employee must ensure the Trust or Academy receives any fee paid.

If the work is not done as an official work duty, the employee may keep any fee paid, provided that the preparation and the presentation/advice is done in the employee's own time and the employee is not acting as a representative of the Trust or academy.

## 8. Personal Interests

- a. Employees must declare to the Head teacher/Chief Officer/CEO, any personal financial or non-financial interests that may be deemed to conflict with the Trust's interests.
- b. Personal interests include, for example, an involvement in a professional capacity with an outside organisation which has dealings with the Trust's and/or academy's interests, e.g. grant requests, suppliers, contractors etc. All Trustees, Governors and Senior Leadership Team members are required to declare any conflict of interest on appointment. This should be reviewed regularly as determined by the Governance structure.
- c. Where an employee has declared an interest the Head teacher/CEO will convey details of that interest on the Register of Business Interests under the authority of the Trustees to ensure that the interest is fully considered and any necessary action taken to avoid all situations of potential conflict.
- d. The Trust respects the rights of employees to a life outside work but do require employees to clearly separate their employment from activities in their private life. Employees must only present their views or act on issues outside work (e.g. communications with the media or as a member of a pressure group) as a private individual. Employees must ensure that when engaging in such activities it is clear that they are not seen as a representative of the Trust and/or school but as private individuals.
- e. Employees are expected to raise concerns about work-related issues through appropriate Trust procedures (including via the trade unions). It is not acceptable for employees to pursue work - related issues which affect them as a private individual, where there is a conflict between their private interest and their contractual duties as a Trust employee.
- f. All activities undertaken by employees during working hours must assist and/or support, not conflict with, the work of the Trust and/or academy. For example, during contractual hours employees must not persuade community groups to come to a view which is contradictory to the accepted Trust and/or Governing Body view. This paragraph does not restrict employees having the right to legitimate protest on issues relating to their security of employment or changes to their conditions of service.
- g. Employees should declare membership of any secret societies to the Trust, via the Head teacher/Chief Officer/CEO. The definition of secret society is as follows: "Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting which:

- is not open to members of the public who are not members,
- includes a requirement to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance in order to gain membership
- includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy in regard to rules, membership or conduct.”

## **9. Equality Issues**

- a) Waterton Academy Trust is an equal opportunities employer and employees must ensure they are aware of, and comply with, all workplace policies relating to equality and diversity issues.
- b) All members of the communities that the Trust serves, pupils and colleagues have a right to be treated with fairness and equality.
- c) Employees must be familiar with the Trust's policy on discrimination and harassment and ensure they treat all members of the communities that the Trust serves, pupils and colleagues with dignity and respect. The Trust takes this matter seriously and will deal with any breach of policy in line with disciplinary procedures
- d) If employees consider that they have been subject to discrimination and/or harassment in the course of their employment, they must report this to their appropriate manager / Head teacher, at the earliest opportunity so the concerns can be investigated and responded to as appropriate.

## **10. Tendering, Corruption and Financial Information**

### **10.1 Separation of roles during tendering**

- a) Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with external contractors must be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Trust and/or academy and be mindful of the need for accountability and be aware of the Trust's commitment to providing best value at all times.
- b) Employees must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.
- c) Employees who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for internal or external contractors must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- d) Employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or anyone with whom they are in a personal relationship with when awarding contracts to businesses run by such persons or in which such persons are employed in a senior or relevant managerial capacity and relevant declaration of interest forms must be completed
- e) Employees must not purchase items and/or services for personal use through the Trust's and/or Governing Body's contracts with external contractors.

### **10.2 Corruption, fraud and theft**

- a) It is a serious criminal offence for employees, in their professional capacity, to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, something or showing favour or disfavour to any person. If an allegation is made the employee must be able to show that any benefit has not been dishonestly gained or such conduct will be considered under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.
- b) The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. If an employee does this for money or other financial benefit for themselves or others it may be regarded as a criminal offence requiring police investigation as well as being a serious disciplinary matter; if done for a non-financial benefit it will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.
- c) Theft of the Trust's and/or school's funds or property is considered gross misconduct under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Borrowing Trust and/or Governing Body and/or school money, even when the employee has every intention of returning it within a very short period of time, is also considered as theft.

### **10.3 Use of public funding**

- a) Where responsible for dealing with public funds, employees must ensure that they use these public funds in a responsible and lawful manner at all times. They must strive to ensure value for money to the community that the school serves and to avoid legal challenge to the Trust.
  
- b) The application of financial regulations safeguard the Trust's and/or academy's assets and use of financial and other resources. Employees must comply with these regulations when using or collecting public funds. When placing orders for goods and services employees must ensure that all rules are complied with, in particular the Financial and Contractual Procedures Rules.

## **11. Relationships with Pupils**

### **11.1 Boundaries between personal and professional relationships with pupils**

- a. Employees must understand the importance of establishing and adhering to boundaries between personal and professional relationships with pupils to avoid being open to allegations of favouritism towards, or in some cases abuse of, a pupil.
- b. Employees must ensure that they do not compromise their professional relationship with pupils by pursuing any form of unprofessional, emotional or physical interaction and/or sexual interaction with pupils.
- c. The following are examples of prohibited behaviour which fall outside the boundary of what is acceptable behaviour with regard to maintaining a professional relationship with pupils. This list is not exhaustive but indicative of behaviour deemed to be unacceptable.
  - Sexual relationships
  - Kissing
  - Intimate touching
  - Inappropriate role play
  - Indicating affection or love for a pupil
  - Planned or pre-arranged social meetings in public or in private which are not directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the employee e.g. employees accompanying pupils on an outing
  - Using illegal drugs with a pupil
  - On-line (internet) contact with pupils which is of a social nature, such as becoming 'friends' on social networking sites.
  - Contact with pupils of a social nature using electronic communication systems such as e-mail, text messaging, web cameras or mobile phones
  - Inviting pupils into an employee's home.
  - Using a personal device to take photographs or video of children
  - Persuading or encouraging pupils to act against safeguarding, child protection and prevent procedures.
  - Non-disclosure of safeguarding concern
  - Abusing a position of authority

### **11.2 Gifts and Pupils**

- a. Under no circumstances must an employee accept a gift of money of any value from pupils.
- b. Under no circumstances must an employee solicit gifts from pupils.



- c. Employees must not have any financial dealings with any pupils except where it is a specific requirement of their post, and then only within the boundaries of their duties.
- d. Employees must not borrow money or other property from pupils.
- e. Employees must not give personal gifts to individual pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the pupil. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil must be consistent with the Trust's/academy's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.
- f. There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff (e.g. at Christmas or as a thank you gift) and this is acceptable. Such gifts must be of a very small cash value where it would be difficult to avoid causing offence. It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Where an employee is in any doubt, they must refer the matter to the Head teacher and reviewed in line with the Gifts and Hospitality Policy

## **12. Safeguarding of Pupils**

### **12.1 General**

- a. Employees have a responsibility to create and maintain a culture that will help deter, prevent and detect inappropriate or abusive behaviour. These responsibilities include:
- ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place;
  - following the regulations as set out in the Independent Safeguarding Authority's vetting and barring scheme;
  - setting acceptable standards of behaviour;
  - taking concerns seriously;
  - increasing awareness/commitment to safeguarding.
  - adherence to the guidance included within the Trust's safeguarding policies and documentation
  - following Safer Recruitment principles
  - Notifying HR of any employee safeguarding concerns
  - Excessive, unwanted, physical force

### **12.2 Safeguarding the welfare of pupils**

- a. Further to the provision of section 9 above it is important to highlight the responsibilities of the Trust and its employees in safeguarding pupils who depend on the Trust's and the academy's services.
- b. Where a pupil is dependent upon the Trust/academy and its employees, the carer role must always be placed above all other interests. An employee must not compromise their relationship with vulnerable pupils by pursuing conflicts of interest such as unprofessional, emotional or physical interaction and/or sexual interaction.
- c. All behaviour or action on the part of employees will be open to scrutiny. Any behaviour or action which involves secrecy is almost certainly inappropriate and is likely to constitute serious misconduct.
- d. If an employee has difficulty enforcing or maintaining appropriate boundaries in terms of their professional relationship with a pupil because of the actions or responses of the pupil themselves, the issue must be referred to the Headteacher immediately to allow appropriate action to be taken and recorded.
- e. Employees assisting pupils to break the laws in relation to the use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs will be deemed to have committed gross misconduct under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

- f. If an employee reasonably suspects another employee is acting contrary to the provisions set out above they must inform the Head teacher immediately. Employees may also refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing Code of Practice.
- g. Whenever it is suspected or alleged that an employee may have:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a pupil;
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a pupil; or
  - Behaved towards a pupil in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with pupils;

this MUST be reported to the Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer in order that the matter be considered and action taken where required.

The Academy DSL must also inform Trust HR

- h. Employees must adhere to the guidance within the Trust's safeguarding policy and documentation This information must be shared with new starters as part of their induction.

## **13. Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship**

### **13.1 Gifts & Hospitality**

- a. It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Employees need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect.
- b. Employees must only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to pass on information or represent the Trust in the community. Similarly they may attend events hosted by organisations with which the Trust and/or academy has formal partnership working arrangements if this is seen to be helping to strengthen the partnership. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions must only be accepted when these are part of the life of the community or where the Trust and/or Governing Body and/or academy should be seen to be represented. If accepted on this basis, the same must be properly authorised and recorded by the CEO/Head teacher.
- c. When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer must be politely informed of the Trust's procedures and standards.
- d. Employees must not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers. Keeping insignificant items of token value, such as pens or diaries, is acceptable. Accepting personal gifts of small value from outside suppliers or private individuals may be allowed if it is provided for under the Trust's policy, which may supplement the framework set out in this Code.
- e. If an employee receives a gift with more than a token value without warning, it must be reported immediately to the CEO/Head teacher, who will decide in consultation with the Trustees/Governing Body whether the gift should be returned.
- f. When receiving authorised hospitality employees must be particularly sensitive to timing in relation to any decision which the Trust or academy may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.
- g. Accepting hospitality by attending relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where the Trust is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment etc are required, employees must ensure the Trust/academy meets the cost of such visits to avoid risking the integrity of future purchasing decisions.

- h. Employees accepting offers of hospitality are acting as ambassadors for the Trust and/or academy. They must act appropriately at all times, including acting responsibly when drinking alcohol.
- i. Care must be taken to ensure that any hospitality provided by the Trust and/or academy is seen to be appropriate and justifiable in terms of the costs and value for money. Any spending relating to providing hospitality must be authorised by the appropriate budget holder, who will keep a record of the spending and the justification for it, in a way which allows for an open and transparent audit of such expenditure.

### **13.2 Sponsorship**

- a. When an outside organisation wants to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic rules about accepting gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- b. Where the Trust/academy wishes to sponsor an event, employees or a person with whom an employee is in a personal relationship (as defined in section 4 of this Code), must not benefit in any way without there being full disclosure to the CEO/Head teacher of any such interest prior to the event. Similarly, where the Trust and/or Governing Body and/or school gives support to the community through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, employees must ensure that impartial advice is given and there is not a conflict of interest.

#### **14. Contact with the Press and Media**

- a) Unless specifically nominated and authorised by the CEO and/or Trustees , employees must not give reports or speak to the press and media on matters relating to employment with the Trust or the business and/or decisions of the Trust and/or Governing Body.
- b) The CEO is responsible for dealing with the press and media. They may specifically nominate other employees. Employees with this responsibility must not give views which are contrary to a position taken by the Trust and/or Governing Body which may be deemed to be critical of such decisions. In the case of incidents at the academy which may reach the public domain (e.g. court cases) then the Head teacher is advised to contact the CEO/Trustees who will issue a statement on behalf of the Governing Body and/or academy.
- c) Nothing in this Code is intended to inhibit or restrict the reasonable and legitimate role of trade union representatives but they are bound, in carrying out their role, to honour the intent of the Code. No representative should use unauthorised information in their union roles.

## **15. Use of Electronic Equipment**

### **15.1 Context**

- a. All electronic equipment provided by the Trust and/or academy is for the use of employees in relation to their work or for users not directly employed by the Trust but authorised to use the equipment by the Trust. Employees should be encouraged to use electronic equipment at work for personal learning and development. All use must, however, comply with the expected standards and restrictions as stated below.

### **15.2 Standards expected**

- b. The Trust requires employees to use electronic equipment in a responsible and legal manner. The use of offensive, abusive or inappropriate language in e-mails or other communications is forbidden.
- c. All material stored on the Trust's and/or academy's system is confidential and subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Trust expects the highest standards of confidentiality to be observed. Employees must clarify any queries about storage and the use of information with the Head teacher or Data Protection Lead for the Trust (currently the Chief Operations Officer).
- d. User codes and passwords are allocated to allow individuals access to only those parts of the system that they need to access. User codes or passwords must not be disclosed by Employees to any other user, including colleagues. Should any employee discover they have access to information outside those parts of the system they need to access, this should be raised with the Headteacher/Chief Officer/Data Protection Lead as a matter of urgency and confidentiality in respect of information accessed must be maintained.

### **15.3 Restrictions on use**

Includes but not limited to internet and information devices capable of accessing the internet or running software, including computers and mobile devices, etc.

- a. Use of the Trust's electronic equipment for any of the following purposes is strictly forbidden:
  - Knowingly sending, receiving, accessing, downloading or posting any material that is illegal, obscene, indecent, abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or libellous, in breach of copyright, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate and/or that breaches Trust equality and diversity policy
  - Pursuing personal business interests.
  - Engaging in gambling.

- Knowingly engaging in any activity which threatens the integrity or availability of the Trust's or academy's systems.
- Using automated internet based information services which push information to the desktop, e.g. news ticker tape services (except for legitimate business use).
- Attempting to breach security systems (hack) whether inside or outside the Trust or academy.
- Transmitting, receiving, copying or storing digital media (including software, music, video etc) except for legitimate purposes in a way that complies with the copyright and licensing regulations.
- Playing computer games, accessing chat rooms or similar entertainment.
- Accessing or engaging with social media platforms during contracted work hours that is not directly related to work based activities.

If employees are in any doubt of usage, they must clarify this with their Head teacher or Line Manager.

#### **15.4 Security clearance for data usage**

- a. Some posts may require an employee to undertake specific security checks where access to specific electronic channels is a requirement of the post.
- b. If any such employee becomes subject to a criminal conviction, caution, pending prosecution or police enquiry, they must notify the Head teacher immediately. The Head teacher must in turn notify HR/Chief Officer/CEO as appropriate
- c. Any information provided will be considered within the context of the duties of the post and is essential in helping to safeguard the Trust and for general safeguarding as specified in Section 6.

#### **15.5 Personal use**

- a. Internet and information systems are provided for work purposes and their use for work will always take precedence. Some personal use will be allowed but any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks). All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code.
- b. The occasional and reasonable private use of telephones will be allowed but incoming and outgoing calls must be kept to a minimum and be made during non-working time. In exceptional cases and with prior agreement from their manager, employees may be allowed to keep their personal mobiles on during works time in order to receive an urgent personal call.



- c. The Trust's messaging systems (e-mail, SMS etc) are for business use. Employees are encouraged to use a personal email address for all non business communications. Occasional and reasonable use of personal email is allowed and must, wherever possible, be carried out in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid lunch breaks) and must not interfere with the performance of their duties. All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code. Employees must not 'post' sensitive, confidential or critical information relating to their employment on social networking sites such as 'blogs', Face book and Twitter or by other electronic means, or information from which any individual or piece of work can be identified or identity inferred during their working hours.
- d. Employees must not use a work email address to register for personal accounts e.g. social media, retail, streaming services etc (this list is indicative but not exhaustive)

## **16. Health and Safety**

### **16.1 General**

- a. Employees must not act either wilfully or unintentionally in a way which could put pupils, members of the public, colleagues and/or themselves at risk. Employees must adhere to the duty of care set out within the Trust's and academy's Health and Safety policies and associated procedures and guidance.

### **16.2 Driver competency**

- b. Employees required to drive or those who volunteer to drive a vehicle as part of their duties must be suitably insured and observe the Highway Code driving with due care and caution. Where an employee volunteers to use their own vehicle for work purposes, the employee must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and complies with all legal requirements for road use. Evidence of suitability to drive and vehicle roadworthiness will be checked on a routine basis

### **16.3 Smoking and use of e-cigarettes**

- a. The Trust has a policy on smoking and the use of e-cigarettes at work that applies to employees working in academies, which is incorporated into employees' contracts of employment. This complies with the Trust's and academy's Health and Safety policies and associated procedures and guidance.
- b. If employees are found smoking in contravention of the Smoking Policy, this could lead to disciplinary action being taken against them under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Any disciplinary action will be that considered appropriate in the circumstances, up to and including summary dismissal for persistent contravention.

#### **16.4 Alcohol and drugs**

- a. Employees are required to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs and required to not have their work performance impaired by alcohol or drugs. Failure to comply with this requirement will lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Any disciplinary action will be that considered appropriate in the circumstances, up to and including summary dismissal. Any disciplinary action will be that considered appropriate in the circumstances, up to and including summary dismissal.
- b. Due to the nature of the organisation, drinking alcohol or illegal drug use immediately before, or during the work day, will not be allowed on health and safety grounds.

Where an employee's involvement with illegal drugs or excessive use of alcohol takes place outside working hours, the Trust will consider the impact this may have on their employment. This will include consideration of any impact on the Trust's and/or academy's reputation and/or public confidence and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

- c. The Trust will seek to provide appropriate support to any employee who recognises they have an alcohol/drug dependency problem.

## **17. Conduct and Standards**

### **17.1 Conduct outside working hours**

- a. Serious misconduct or criminal offences committed outside working hours, which bring the individual as a Trust employee or the Trust and/or academy into disrepute, could lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Any disciplinary action will be that considered appropriate in the circumstances, up to and including summary dismissal.
- b. Employees must inform the Head teacher/Chief Officer/CEO immediately of any issues of this nature to enable early consideration of their situation. This will be considered within the context of the duties of the post held and is essential in helping to safeguard the safety of pupils.
- c. Where employees are acting in other capacities e.g. School Governors, they must be mindful of maintaining the reputation of the Trust and the academy at all times.
- d. Employees must not 'post' sensitive, confidential or critical information relating to work on social networking sites such as 'blogs', Facebook and Twitter or by other electronic means, or information from which any individual or piece of work can be identified or identity inferred.
- e. Employees should be mindful of the content of their posts in respect of non-work related matters and ensure that wider professional standards are maintained to avoid potential offence to other users and reputational damage to the organisation.
- f. Employees should exercise extreme caution when using all forms of social media. The Trust expects all members of staff to set high professional standards.
- g. Employees should not express personal viewpoints in relation to employment or the employer on a public or closed group that could potentially contain stakeholders of the organisation. Employees should be aware that due to the size of the Trust, it may be difficult to identify all potential stakeholders and as such, caution should be applied.
- h. Attempts to post viewpoints anonymously or where the identity of the employer may be inferred or deduced through an employees position within the Trust are also included within this code.

### **17.2 Standards of dress and appearance**

- a. The Trust takes the view that all employees should be dressed appropriately for their particular role. The Trust is also mindful of the need to avoid direct or indirect

discrimination against an employee on grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion, belief or age.

- b. In all cases employees will be required to conform to requirements for dress codes which apply for health and safety reasons.

**17.3 Language**

- a. The use of swear words, offensive language and/or gestures in conversation and communication with pupils, parents, colleagues, visitors or members of the community which the academy serves is unacceptable at all times.
- b. Language which is perceived as patronising or overly familiar by pupils, parents, colleagues, visitors or members of the community which the academy serves is also unacceptable. Examples of this type of language will include person “dear” or “love” and the suggestion that such terms are widely used within the geographical area of the Trust is not an argument for professional staff being permitted to use them in the course of their employment.

Document Detail			
Document Name	Employee Code of Conduct		
Version	2		
Effective from:	July 2021		
Approved by:	Trust Board		
Approval meeting reference:	July 2021		
Next Review Date:	July 2023		
Chief Officer Signature	<i>V. Collins</i> V Collins, COO		
Version Control			
Version	Date	Author	Change /Reference
2.	June 2021	VC, AW	Reflects Trust staff and governance structures. Includes volunteers. Enhanced explanations in some areas and added examples of conduct, including social media. Former employees still to follow the data protection act. Expectation that a declaration of interest form be completed. HR to be informed of safeguarding concerns. Expectation that staff report any unnecessary access to data – such as access to a secure drive. Clarified expectations around use of personal and work email addresses. Driving on work business checks added.
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