

## **1. Introduction**

This Code of Conduct aims to establish a set of principles which underpin the expected conduct of individuals in all University of Chichester Academy Trust academies, with the intention of encouraging staff to achieve the highest standards of conduct at work and of minimising the risk of improper conduct occurring. The Trust will foster a culture of the highest professional standards. This guidance includes:

- the professional standards expected
- a summary of responsibilities in order to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people
- safer working practices
- whistleblowing procedures

This Code of Conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to children and young people. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the children and young people where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to secure the well-being of the children and young people in their care.

The Trust and its Academies take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people very seriously. It is expected that staff and everyone who may come into contact with the academies children and families, are familiar with this Code of Conduct, helping to ensure children are safe and enabling all children to achieve their best.

## **2. Scope and Definition**

For the purpose of this document any reference to “staff”, is a reference to all those named above. Any reference to “children” is a reference to “children and young people”. Children and young people are defined as those being under 18 years of age.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) is the Department for Education’s statutory guidance issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002. This Code of Conduct supports the guidance and all staff including apprentices, temporary and supply staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training, should be familiar with and behave in accordance with, this Code of Conduct

Academies and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children and young people. This system is described in statutory guidance from HM Government “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023”.

## **3. Professional standards at work**

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. All staff as appropriate to the role and/or job description of the individual, must:

- place the well-being and learning of children at the centre of their professional practice
- have high expectations for all children, be committed to addressing underachievement and work to help children progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances
- treat children fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously and value diversity and individuality
- model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in children, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people
- respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of children, recognizing the key role that parents and carers play in their children’s education
- seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person’s learning and well-being in and out of school
- reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues

- University of Chichester Academy Trust expects staff to treat each other, children, parents and the wider school community with dignity and respect at all times
- Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of their academy, as well as its policies and procedures and act in accordance with these at all times, including in their dealings with those who come into contact with the academy e.g. visitors.

Teaching staff are reminded of, and are expected to uphold, their wider responsibilities as set out in the Teachers' Standards, including an understanding of, and acting within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

#### **4. Safeguarding**

It is intended that the underlying principles of safeguarding is that:

- Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe
- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned
- Practices are based on a child-centred approach.

Staff must be aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities, including to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, to identify children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm and to take appropriate action in such cases to prevent concerns from escalating. *Appendix 1 provides information on types of abuse and neglect, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, and Preventing Radicalisation.*

All members of staff must familiar with the safeguarding policy of their academy and be aware of their academy's systems for supporting child safeguarding, including the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction.

Concerns about the welfare of a child must be raised without delay to the Academy's DSL in the first instance or to the Headteacher. In the event that the DSL and Headteacher is unavailable, you should contact another senior member of your Academy or if you have concerns about immediate serious harm to a child your local safeguarding children hub:

<http://www.portsmouthscb.org.uk/professionals/worried-about-a-child-suffering-from-harm/>

<http://www.westsussexscb.org.uk/2016/04/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash/>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/childprotection/mash>

If there is risk of immediate serious harm to a child and you are unable to contact any of the above, you can call your relevant Local Authority's safeguarding team:

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|---|---------------|
| Hampshire County Council Designated Officer   | 01962 876364  |
| Portsmouth City Council Designated Officer    | 023 9288 2500 |
| West Sussex County Council Designated Officer | 0330 2225296  |

Staff should be familiar with the school's safeguarding child protection policy, which is available to all staff to download from their Academy's website. All staff will receive appropriate child protection training and will be provided with guidance on child safeguarding as part of their induction.

#### **5. Appropriate relationships**

Individuals who work or volunteer in an academy environment are in a position of trust. Staff should be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where physical contact is essential, e.g. for safety reasons, the child's permission must be gained for that contact wherever possible. Any physical contact used to remove a child from a dangerous situation or to prevent either harm to a child or others, should be recorded and immediately reported to the Academy's DSL or Headteacher. Cases where accidental physical contact was made, should also be reported to the Academy's DSL or Headteacher.

## **6. Behaviour management and Physical Intervention**

All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating children by overwhelming physical presence is not acceptable in any situation.

Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort. The circumstances in which staff can physically intervene with a child are covered by the 1996 Education Act. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a child from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

## **7. Contact with Children and Young People and the abuse of trust**

Any sexual behaviour, whether by a member of staff, with or towards a child or young person, is not tolerated in any form. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 specifically established a criminal offence of the abuse of trust in relation to teachers and others who are in relationship of trust with 16-18 year olds.

Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a child has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence. A relationship between a member of staff and a child cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm to children and all adults have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

## **8. One to One Situations and Meetings**

Staff working in one to one situations with children may be more vulnerable to allegations. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and children are met. Where a one to one meeting is unavoidable, it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the academy and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

## **9. Contact with Parents**

Staff are expected to interact with parents in a polite and respectful manner and recognise parents' entitlement to express any concerns they may have about their child's learning, safety or wellbeing. Staff should avoid discussing school matters with parents outside school if approached and should instead refer the parent to the normal school communication channels.

## **10. Contact the general public**

There is a general expectation of the Trust that staff will be polite to members of the public at all times. Staff must ensure that any information provided in relation to the academy is accurate and respect confidential information provided to them in the course of their work. Significant concerns or complaints expressed to them by parents, carers or the general public must be passed immediately to the senior management of the academy.

## **11. First Aid**

All Academies must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Staff must have had the appropriate training before administering first aid or medication except in an emergency.

## **12. Use of IT including social media**

Social networking sites offer the opportunity for communication with children, young people and their parents outside normal professional boundaries. Academy staff must take care to protect their privacy and protect themselves from risk of allegations in relation to inappropriate relationships and cyberbullying. Staff must

exercise care and maintain appropriate boundaries in online relationships with parents or pupils through social networking sites, instant messaging or other media, whether this is through academy or personal IT facilities.

Internal e-mail and internet systems must be used in accordance with the E-Safety and acceptable use of ICT Policy, available to download from the Academy Portal. Staff must not post material which damages the reputation of the Trust or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.

Staff must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or e-mail address to children unless the need to do so is agreed with a member of their senior management team.

### **13. Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Staff must ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it. Where information is disclosed this should be in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from the Headteacher or another appropriate senior member of staff.

Confidential information about children must be held securely and in line with Trust procedures.. Confidential information about children must not be held off the school site, other than on security protected school equipment. Information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

### **14. Equality and Diversity**

The Trust and its academies are committed to creating an inclusive environment in which the diversity of individuals is enriching and celebrated, and where working in an atmosphere of mutual respect is supportive and fair, enabling equality of opportunity.

The Trust nor its academies will tolerate any form of discrimination or abuse by staff, parents or anyone else connected with the Trust, its academies and its activities. All staff are expected to uphold these principles. In order to advance equality of opportunity it is recognised that this may require treating individuals differently.

When recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers academies should comply with the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy, a copy of which is held in the Academy's HR Manual or available to download from the Academy Portal.

### **15. Propriety, Behaviour, Reputation and Appearance**

All staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the Trust into disrepute.

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff must ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

The Trust and its academies recognise the diversity of cultures and religions of its staff and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations of other staff, pupils and the school.

### **16. Conduct outside work**

Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside of the academy and responsibilities within the academy. In no case should outside activities bring the academy into disrepute.

Where staff are in doubt as to whether there is a conflict of interest advice must be sought from their line manager or Headteacher in the first instance.

### **17. Declaration of interests**

Staff should consider carefully whether they need to declare to the academy any relationship with an individual where this might cause a conflict with the academy's activities, for example, a relationship with a

Governor, another staff member or a contractor who provides services to the academy. Where such a declaration is necessary this should be made to the Headteacher.

### **18. Outside Work**

Any work undertaken outside the Academy, either paid or voluntary, must not conflict with the interests of the Academy, nor be at a level which may contravene the Working Time Regulations or affect an individual's performance at work. All staff are bound by a duty of fidelity which they should not breach confidence or participate in competing activities.

### **19. Public Interest Disclosure**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) gives protection to people who disclose reasonable concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice at work. This is sometimes known as whistleblowing. The Trust and its academies will treat all matters of malpractice very seriously and allegations about such matters will be dealt with quickly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities in bringing matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership in their academy. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A clear procedure is provided for staff to raise issues with the purpose of assisting in reducing the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the individual or by the academy. Please refer to the

### **20. Health and safety**

Staff must adhere to their academy's Health and Safety policy and should ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and others in the academy environment safe.

### **21. Educational Visits and after-school activity**

Staff should take particular care when supervising children in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit, particularly in a residential setting, or after-school activity. Staff remain in a position of trust and the same standards of conduct apply.

### **22. Gifts and hospitality**

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Money should never be accepted as a gift.

It is not acceptable for staff to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the academies reward system.

Staff should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

### **23. Use of Resources and Funds**

The use of academy resources, property and equipment is for academy-related activities only, except where otherwise agreed by the Headteacher.

All members of staff must use any public or academy funds entrusted or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner and in line with the Academies Financial Handbook 2014 and Financial Procedures Manual.

### **24. Appointment of Staff**

Staff must not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative, friend or partner. In this paragraph: 'Relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse of partner of any of the preceding persons. Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who have a close personal relationship.

### **25. Trade union membership**

The Trust supports the system of collective bargaining and believes in the principle of solving industrial relations problems by discussion and agreement. It may be advantageous for staff to belong to a trade union that represents them on the appropriate negotiating body. All staff are encouraged to be a member of an appropriate trade union.

## 26. Breach of Conduct

Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the Academy's Disciplinary Policy, a copy of which is available from your Academy's Business Manager or Headteacher.

## 27. Queries

Where clarification is required on any aspect of this document Individuals should contact their Headteacher in the first instance.

## 28. Communication

All new staff will be informed of their Academy's Code of Conduct to read and sign as part of their employment pack and a copy placed on the Academy's staff noticeboard. Casual, Temporary and Supply staff and Contractors will receive a copy on confirmation of work. Governors and Volunteers should receive a copy as part of their induction. A further copy will be placed in the Academy's HR Manual and a copy placed on the Trust's Academy portal and Academy's website.

## 29. Photography

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement. The Data Protection Act 1998 affects the use of photography. An image of a child is personal data and it is, therefore, a requirement under the Act that consent is obtained from the parent of a child for any images made such as those used for Academy web sites, productions or other purposes.

Using images of students for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without the consent of the individual or legal guardian. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

Keeping Children Safe in education, September 2023 can be located at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf)

Working together to safeguard children can be located at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

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