



Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Group	D	People and Culture
Title	D7i	Code of Conduct
Trust sub-committee		Standards
Last reviewed		January 2025
Next scheduled review		January 2027 (review date updated Sept 25)
Co-ordinated by		Director of People



1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all Trust employees, and those acting on behalf of the Trust are expected to observe.
- 1.2 As role models in a unique position of influence, all staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students within the Trust.
- 1.3 This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy which may be found via the myAETHub intranet.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Trust.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.6 Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.
- 1.7 In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.
- 1.8 Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the Trust will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.
- 1.9 This policy should be read in conjunction with the AET Working Practices for All Staff.

2. Principles

- 2.1 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all Trust's policies and procedures.
- 2.2 Staff must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 2.3 All staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- 2.4 All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils/students. Therefore, all staff must:
 - avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times
 - demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same
 - avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

3. Safeguarding Pupils/Students

- 3.1 Staff have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.
- 3.2 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.
- 3.3 The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Designated Senior Person (DSP) as named in the school specific safeguarding policy.

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- 3.4 Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found via the myAETHub intranet or via the HR contact and staff must be familiar with these documents.
- 3.5 Staff should treat pupils/students with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils/students, their parents or carers, or colleagues.
- 3.6 Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils/students, embarrassing, or humiliating pupils/students, discriminating against or favouring pupils/students.
- 3.7 Staff must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- 3.8 Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt with in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

3.9 Low Level Concerns

- 3.9.1 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.
- 3.9.2 A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the Trust may have acted in a way that:
 - 3.9.2.1 is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
 - 3.9.2.2 does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- 3.9.3 Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - 3.9.3.1 being overly friendly with children
 - 3.9.3.2 having favourites
 - 3.9.3.3 taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
 - 3.9.3.4 engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
 - 3.9.3.5 using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

4. Relationships

- 4.1 Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students, staff, clients, contractors, suppliers or parents outside of the Trust. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.
- 4.2 Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Line Manager where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence in accordance with the Relationships at Work Policy which may be found on the myAETHub intranet or via the HR contact.
- 4.3 Staff should not assume that the Trust is aware of any such connections and should use make a declaration using the schools declaration form.

4.4 Relationships with pupils/students

- 4.4.1 See Working Practices for All Staff document.

5. Pupil/Student Development

- 5.1 Staff must comply with all Trust policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils/students.
- 5.2 Staff must cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.
- 5.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

6. Honesty and Integrity

- 6.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Trust property and facilities.
- 6.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010.
 - 6.2.1 A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:
 - 6.2.1.1 offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or
 - 6.2.1.2 if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.
 - 6.2.2 If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure which may be found via the myAETHub intranet or via your HR contact.
- 6.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Trust must be declared to the Line Manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off “token” gifts from pupils/students or parents.
- 6.4 Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils/students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.
- 6.5 Staff must not act on behalf of the Trust unless they have the authority to do so.
- 6.6 Professional references from the Trust will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

7. Conduct outside of Work

- 7.1 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust’s community.
- 7.2 In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.
 - 7.2.1 For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the Trust will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the Trust could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk.
- 7.3 In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee’s suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.
- 7.4 Staff may undertake work outside the Trust, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance in the Trust.

- 7.4.1 It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.
- 7.4.2 Staff must disclose any work outside the Trust or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the Trust
- 7.4.3 if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside the Trust (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their Line Manager.
- 7.5 Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils/students under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the Trust's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students at the Trust.
- 7.6 Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

8. Online Safety and Internet Use

- 8.1 See Working Practices for All Staff document.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student.
- 9.2 All staff are likely/may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential.
 - 9.2.1 For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), this must be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policy and procedure. It must not be discussed outside the Trust, including with the pupils/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the Trust except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter
- 9.3 Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student.
- 9.4 Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.
- 9.5 Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the Trust, its performance, governance, pupils/students or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the CEO / Co-CEO, Head Teacher / Principal / Head of School or designated person.

10. Dress and Appearance (read in conjunction with Working Practices for All Staff document)

- 10.1 All staff are role models for impressionable young adults. Working in a professional setting, it is expected that at all times, staff use good judgement with regards to their dress and appearance to ensure they promote a professional image appropriate to their role, and remain mindful of their unique position of influence over the children and young people in our care.
- 10.2 As a general principle, staff are expected to be no less formally dressed than pupils. Each school within the Trust may provide additional guidance to staff on dress code appropriate to their own individual school setting and in line with the principles of this policy.
- 10.3 Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive.
- 10.4 Sportswear is only permitted where it supports the delivery of teaching or tasks, for example when teaching physical education. In this instance, sportswear should be school approved without any

team logos.

- 10.5 Footwear that is appropriate to a busy school environment and which does not pose a risk to health and safety should be worn e.g. no flip flops/backless shoes.
- 10.6 If provided, professional uniform and safety-wear must be worn.
- 10.7 In the first instance, staff should seek to ensure visible tattoos are covered in the workplace to avoid unintended influence or distraction.
 - 10.7.1 Where it is not possible to keep a tattoo covered, visible tattoos should be discrete.
 - 10.7.2 Any tattoos which appear to be discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate for a school setting will not be accepted.
 - 10.7.3 Tattoos on the face are not acceptable unless proven for religious or cultural purposes or required for medical reasons.
 - 10.7.3 Staff may be asked to provide a verifiable translation for any wording not written in English and an explanation of characters, representations or the tattoos' meaning or significance.
 - 10.7.4 Tattoos may be assessed on an individual basis to ensure they are appropriate.
- 10.8 Any piercings should be discrete with a single nose piercing the only acceptable facial piercing.
- 10.9 The Trust understands that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some employees to follow a code (for example, if an employee has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the Trust will discuss how we can support the employee and make reasonable adjustments where possible.
- 10.10 The Trust has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

11. Compliance

- 11.1 All staff will be asked to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- 11.2 Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal. Staff should refer to the Disciplinary Policy for further information.

