



KITE ACADEMY TRUST

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS & STAFF

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1 Introduction

This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all Kite Academy Trust Governors and staff. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

Academy staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for children. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all children within the academy.

Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Kite Academy Trust, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the Kite Academy Trust regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- All members of staff including teaching and support staff;
- Volunteers, including Governors;
- Casual workers;
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

The Kite Academy Trust require that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the academy disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

This Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the children and the Trust.

2 Professional Behaviour & Conduct

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behavior, and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Kite Academy Trust staff are expected to treat each other, children, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to children and ensure that the safety and welfare of children are accorded the highest priority.

Staff should show fairness in their treatment of individuals and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating other staff/children, making jokes at the expense of them, discriminating against or favouring staff/children and sarcasm.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the Trust and must not do or say anything which may bring the Trust into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interests between activities undertaken outside the Trust and their responsibilities within the Trust. Staff should act in accordance with Trust and academy policies and procedures at all times.

The Trust has a Dignity at Work Policy, which all staff are expected to comply with, that includes Email Etiquette and Meeting Etiquette guides.

3 Dress & Appearance

The Kite Academy Trust recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.

Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans. Low/cut or strappy tops revealing large areas of skin are not acceptable; neither are jeans or short skirts/shorts for general day-to-day wear.

Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

Discreet earrings/body piercings are acceptable but staff should be aware that as role models for children in the academies, demonstrative piercings/tattoos should be covered or removed while on academy premises.

Appropriate footwear should be worn at all times; rubber flip-flops are not deemed safe; trainers/baseball boot/shoes should only be worn when used in PE activities.

4 Smoking, Alcohol & Other Substances

The Kite Academy Trust premises are all non-smoking sites. Staff must not smoke on Trust premises or outside the gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the grounds entirely.

Staff must not smoke whilst working with, or supervising, children offsite.

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near Trust premises during the school day.

Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at events (i.e. leaving proms, residential visits) both on the Trust premises and an external setting.

5 Relationships with Children

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with children 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 not establish or seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a child seeks to establish social contact, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with children and should not engage in any sexual activity with a child. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Working Together to Safeguard Children¹ defines sexual abuse as ... “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).”

Staff should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003².

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a child, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children or discuss a child’s sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Contact with children should be through the Kite Academy Trust’s authorised mechanisms. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with children. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform their Academy Head/Line Manager immediately.

Kite Academy Trust staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any child on roll within the Kite Academy Trust on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

² Section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

or other similar social media accounts of children or their parents. Staff must have regard for online safety principles and follow all relevant advice and guidance.

6 Infatuations

It is not unusual for children or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your Line Manager.

7 Gifts/Hospitality

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where children or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to children that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult your Line Manager.

Staff must not accept significant gifts or hospitality from children, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to your Line Manager and recorded.

Personal gifts must not be given by staff to children and any reward to children should be in accordance with the academy's Behaviour Policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

8 Physical Contact with Pupils

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with children it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with children.

Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the child's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an

open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your Line Manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Staff should refer to the Kite Academy Trust's Welfare Policy.

9 Child in Distress

There may be occasions when a child is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your Line Manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, you should seek further advice from your Line Manager.

10 Showers & Changing

Children are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the children and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.

11 One to One Situations

Staff working individually with children should be aware of the potential vulnerability of children and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the child and to themselves.

Individual work with children should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality, a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

12 Transporting Pupils

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport children offsite, for example for sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of academy activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff should never transport children while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prior to transporting children offsite, consent must be obtained from the child's parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the children is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.

Staff should refer to the Kite Academy Trust's Driving & Transportation Policy.

13 Online Safety

Staff should follow the Kite Academy Trust's Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Policy and associated Acceptable Use Agreement at all times and have regard for online safety principles.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, their academy or the academy community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.

Staff must not make contact with children, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow child accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate 1:1 with children via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. Acceptable methods are via the use of the parents' email accounts or telephone. Whole class/group communication may also take place via postings on the academy's website or using recognised home:school messaging systems such as SeeSaw, Tapestry, Class Dojos or Marvellous Me.

Staff should not make contact with children's family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow children's family member's account on any social media platform. However, the Kite Academy Trust acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with children's family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

14 Use of Mobile Telephones

Mobile telephones and personally-owned portable devices brought in to the academy are the responsibility of the device owner. The Kite Academy Trust accept no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile telephones or portable devices.

Mobile telephones and personal devices may not be used during lessons or formal academy time. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times and stored securely. The Bluetooth functionality of any device should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other devices. Mobile telephones and personal devices should not be used to take photographs.

Mobile telephones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in the presence of children, or in certain areas within the academy site such as changing rooms and toilets. Mobile telephones and personal devices may be used during lunch or break times when there are no children present. In the event of a personal emergency, staff are able to use the academy telephone system.

Personal mobile telephones should not be used to contact parents/carers, except in extenuating circumstances and with the permission of the Academy Head. Where it is necessary to make a call from a personal mobile telephone, staff should enable the function that prevents their telephone number from being identified.

15 Remote & Virtual Working

Remote and virtual working can be a valuable way to continue learning outside the classroom and business support services, particularly in difficult circumstances such as school closures. There are a number of online options that may be considered, ranging from setting tasks to be completed, providing access to online resources, creating video tutorials, to interactive video conferencing. In all situations,

staff are expected to maintain a professional manner and appearance, while continuing to follow this Code of Conduct.

Where staff are interacting with children online, they should continue to follow the Kite Academy Trust's Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Policy and associated Acceptable Use Agreement at all times and have regard for online safety principles. Practices and stipulations of the Kite Academy Trust's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy continue to apply at all times.

If a video recorded or 'live stream' lesson is conducted, staff should consider their conduct, communication and lesson content. Staff should maintain a high level of professionalism and treat any online lesson in the same way as a classroom lesson. Staff should dress appropriately and find a setting which has a plain background with no personal information on display and where background noise or conversations cannot be overheard.

Staff must not communicate 1:1 with children via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. Acceptable methods are via the use of the parents' email accounts or telephone number and from academy accounts or online platforms, never personal staff accounts. In an exceptional circumstance where it is necessary to make a call from a personal mobile telephone, staff should enable the function that prevents their telephone number from being identified. Whole class/group communication may also take place via postings on the academy's website or using recognised home:school messaging systems such as SeeSaw, Tapestry, Class Dojos or Marvellous Me.

Staff must continue to be aware of their responsibilities under Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 when accessing families' contact details.

16 Photography, Video and Images of Children

Many academy activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra academy activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the image of a child is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a child for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the child, remembering that some children do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

Photographs/stills or video footage of children should only be taken using academy equipment for purposes authorised by the academy and should be stored securely and only on academy equipment.

Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of children to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable children who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that children who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

17 Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about children, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the child on a need to know basis.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a child or their family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate academy procedure. It must not be discussed outside the academy, including with the child's parent/carer, nor with colleagues in the academy except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with each academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a child or that might suggest a child is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with the Kite Academy Trust's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the child.

Staff should refer to the Department for Education's [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)³ for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the academy.

Please see the Kite Academy Trust's Data Protection Policy, the Freedom of Information Policy and Confidentiality Policy & Statement.

18 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.

All academy staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to The Kite Academy Trust's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of children or colleagues may be at risk.

19 Compliance

All staff must complete the form in Appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy retained on the member of staff's file.

Document Management

Document ID:	P1082		
Last Review:	March 2023	Review Period:	3 years
Responsibility of:	Director of Operations	Ratified by:	Trustees (29.03.23)

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

