

E3 Staff Code of Conduct Policy



St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

Signed off by: Trust Board

Date from: January 2025

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*(This is a Hertfordshire County Council Policy adopted for use by the
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust)*

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1. Objective, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all Academy employees are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within the Academy.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Academy. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

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 and Procedure which may be found in the staff handbook. 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.

2. Setting an Example

All staff who work in Academies set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore for example, avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all Academy policies and procedures.

3. Safeguarding Pupils

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

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect

The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil or colleague to the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The details of each Academy DSL can be found in the Trust Child Protection Policy and in the Child Protection Policy of each individual Academy.

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found on their websites and in the staff handbooks, and staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff should treat pupils with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of pupils, embarrassing or humiliating pupils, discriminating against or favouring pupils.

Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

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 also those considered to be low level concerns. (i.e. those which do not meet the harm test).

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.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the Academy may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favorites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

4. Relationships

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils outside of Academy; this may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, or family connections. Staff should not assume that the Academy are aware of any such connections. A declaration form may be found in appendix 2 of this document.

Relationships with pupils must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with pupils are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with pupils must be via Academy-authorised mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should personal telephone numbers, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils.

If contacted by a pupil by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes pupils seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

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. This may be due to a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest for example. The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence.

Staff should inform their Line Manager of any relationships which may create an enhanced risk to children so that necessary steps can be taken by the Trust e.g. cohabitation with a person convicted of a serious offence.

5. Pupil Development

Staff must comply with Academy policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of pupils.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils.

6. Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Academy property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing procedure which may be found on the Trust website.

<https://www.stfrancistrust.net/attachments/download.asp?file=27&type=pdf>

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Academy must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from pupils or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

Staff must not act on behalf of the Academy unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the Academy will be provided by the Headteacher. References given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

7. Conduct outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the Academy or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Academy community. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, 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.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the Academy will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the Academy could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk

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.

Staff may undertake work outside Academy, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Academy nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the Academy. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

Staff must disclose any work outside Academy or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the Academy.

If any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member's work outside Academy (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.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are pupils under the age of 18 at another Academy/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the Academy's ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at the Academy.

A 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. E-Safety and Internet Use

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the Online Safety Policy/ Acceptable User Agreements, which may be found in the staff handbooks at all times both inside and outside of work.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the Academy, Academy community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with pupils should only be made via the use of Academy email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of pupils should only be taken using Academy equipment, for purposes authorised by the Academy. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Academy's procedures on Academy equipment.

9. Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils 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.

All staff may at some point witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), 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 pupils parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the Academy except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the Academy's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must not promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the Academy, its performance, governance, pupils or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher.

10. Dress and Appearance

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans.

11. Compliance

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

Appendix 1

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Academy's code of conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to your Line Manager

Appendix 2

Relationships with pupils outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the Academy are known to pupils outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs, family connections, or private tutoring.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of Academy that they may have with pupils.

Employee Name	Pupil Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of Academy with pupils in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a pupil outside of Academy I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the Academy
- No monies come through the Academy at any point, informally (e.g. via the pupil) or formally
- No private tutoring is to take place on the Academy premises

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time I will complete a new form to ensure the Academy are aware of any relationships.

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to your Line Manager