



Special Partnership Trust

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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This policy needs to be read in conjunction with:

- SPT Disciplinary Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding and CP Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Managing Medications
- Child On Child Abuse
- Online Safety
- Absence Management Policy
- Staff and Volunteer ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety (School and Trust Level)
- First Aid Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Policy (School and Trust Level)
- Physical Restraint
- Use Of Mobile Devices
- Data Protection Policy
- Scheme Of Delegation
- Lone Working Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Children and Young People
- Moving and Handling Policy

All policies are located on the Trust and/or your school's website..
Trust-wide policies can be found on the SPT website [here](#)).



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1. Introduction

The Special Partnership Trust is a dynamic and innovative organisation with a culture that supports, develops and maintains a collective understanding, and community of professionals who create a value added SEN model. Special Partnership Trust schools and ARBs work together to deliver an inclusive, high quality educational and residential offer that ensures a long-lasting legacy of SEN educational development, delivery and impact across the South West.

The Special Partnership Trust expects conduct of the highest standard of all employees in accordance with appropriate professional standards and in line with the Trust's values and purpose. As a Trust, we foster a mutually supportive and respectful working environment, where individuals and teams constantly strive to improve and develop through challenge, support and partnership.

It is the aim of our code of conduct to achieve consistency across the organisation and to ensure that stakeholders are not confused by mixed messages. It is important to remember that, if what we say is not supported by what we do, people will believe the actions and not the words.

This code of conduct applies to all employees of The Special Partnership Trust, both in shared offices and the Trust's schools/ARBs regardless of their position, length of service or contract type. Breaches of this code may result in disciplinary action being taken. A finding of gross misconduct will normally lead to your dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice. Please refer to the Trust's Disciplinary procedure for more information. Volunteers, agency workers and (self-employed) contractors should also be made aware of this code, although unlike employees, breaches of the code will not be managed in line with the Trust's Disciplinary procedure.

The guiding principles of The Special Partnership Trust are set out in our Identity and Values page on the Trust website: [Special Partnership Trust - Identity and Values](#).

It is self-evident that if we are to succeed in achieving our vision and expectations of children and young people, we must ourselves strive to lead by example. As adults, employees must maintain a professional approach with the children and young people in our care where all staff provide a positive role model to children and young people, parents, colleagues, and visitors.

All employees of the Trust must be courteous to all people with whom their duties bring them into contact; if this practice is not observed/upheld staff have the right to report this accordingly. It is important that employees are mindful of the impact of their approach and in their working habits carefully considering the impact both will have on their colleagues. When setting or working to deadlines, staff should take into account the workload of colleagues in line with their role.

This code of conduct does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time following consultation.

2. Responsibilities

Staff must not put themselves in a position where their activities outside of the workplace adversely impact on the Trust's reputation or where such activities could bring the Trust into disrepute and/or conflict with their employment contract and their obligations to the Trust as an employee. Such incidences may be considered a breach of trust and confidence and dealt with through the Trust's Disciplinary procedure as a matter of misconduct or gross misconduct. Line managers have a responsibility to direct, guide, support, challenge and advise their staff to ensure everyone is consistently complying with the code of conduct and the Trust's policies and procedures; this may also include line managers undertaking an investigation where such breach may have occurred.

Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children. All staff have a responsibility to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from abuse. Children and young people have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct. Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are shared at induction. This means that staff should develop respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and children and young people and behaviour by the adult must demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

All staff should understand how to raise a concern and must contact designated staff or partner agencies if they have a concern about a child. Staff must always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests; avoiding any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions and taking responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

3. Making professional judgements

This policy cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate, or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff must make decisions or take action in the best interest of a child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour to secure the best interests and welfare of the children and young people in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded in writing and shared with a manager. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists, staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their line manager or, where appropriate, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted;
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications;
- record any areas of disagreement and, if necessary, refer to another agency.

4. Attendance and punctuality

Staff are expected to attend work reliably and follow absence reporting procedures. The Trust recognises that sickness absence may occur and will support employees in accordance with the Attendance Management Policy.

If an employee cannot attend work for any reason, they must advise their place of work as soon as possible and it is important that they adhere to and follow the local protocol for their specific role and school. There is an expectation that teachers and teaching assistants should be at their designated classrooms ready to greet children and young people and to begin work at their start time.

In the exceptional circumstance that a member of staff is late, they must advise their place of work as soon as possible and follow the local protocol for their specific role and school.

Please refer to the Absence Management policy and local absence reporting procedures for further information.

5. Commitment to equality and diversity

The Trust is committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and where diversity is valued.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief;
- Being married or in a civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Sexual orientation;
- Sex/Gender

The Trust will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct related to a protected characteristic. All staff are expected to contribute to a culture of inclusion, equality of opportunity and mutual respect.

Any act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other inappropriate conduct may be dealt with under the Trust's policies and procedures, including the Disciplinary Policy.

Please refer to the Trust's Equality and Diversity policy for more information.

6. Power and positions of trust and authority

As a result of their position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with children in an education setting are in a position of trust in relation to all children and young people on the roll.

This means that staff should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child or young person's or family's detriment
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine children and young people
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children and young people which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

7. Social contact outside of the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of children and young people, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse. It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

If a child or young person or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise their professional judgement in that moment and then inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family. Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency. All staff must inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g., childcare or a personal assistant.

8. Relationships with children and young people

While children are in our care, it is important that employees constantly provide children and young people with positive role models on how to behave and respond to others, by displaying positive behaviours, even under challenging circumstances.

It is therefore paramount for staff to treat children and young people with dignity, to build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times to observe proper boundaries appropriate for their professional position. Employees must have regard for the need to safeguard children and young people's well-being in accordance with statutory policy and provisions and fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. In addition, employees should ensure that their personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit

children and young people's vulnerability or might lead them to break the law. Staff should be mindful not to show favouritism to any student.

Staff must never allow themselves to be compromised by forming personal relationships with children and young people or taking advantage of their relationship with children and young people. Depending on the circumstances, relationships with former children and young people will also be considered in this context. Children and young people are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such, this includes friends identified on social media sites including Facebook.

Employees who have personal connections with children and young people outside school (e.g., relatives, employment as personal assistants, neighbours, members of local community/sports/religious/political etc.), will need to be particularly mindful to maintain relationships/boundaries which do not compromise professional standards and responsibilities or breach confidentiality.

Activities which may lead to disciplinary action being taken include but are not limited to the following:

- Sexual relationships with a student;
- Sexual advances or sexual innuendo;
- Socialising with or engaging with children and young people in your own, personal time, unless authorised by the Headteacher (or the CEO, Chair of Trustees);
- Failure to adhere to professional boundaries can include any aspect of the following: e.g. sending or storing images of children and young people or engaging in private written or electronic communication with them, sharing personal contact details, sharing what is reasonably considered as too much personal information about you/your family/your personal life, engaging with children and young people through social media, chat rooms, messenger devices, blogs, personal e-mail, text/multimedia message or video call;
- Providing personal loans, lending money or goods to children and young people;
- Borrowing goods or money from children and young people;
- Asking children and young people to carry out paid or unpaid private work or services;
- Knowingly purchasing from or selling an item to a student directly or through an auction or selling website;
- Allowing unauthorised and/or unsupervised usage of Trust property or facilities.

Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for children and young people to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. Employees should make every effort to ensure their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry the risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation, they should discuss it with the Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead of their school immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the Whistleblowing policy for further information. Staff actions must include reporting any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or young person may be infatuated with a member of staff and always maintain professional boundaries.

9. Relationships with colleagues

Inevitably within a large organisation disagreements and misunderstandings will occur. It is important to operate on the principle that all colleagues have the interests of the children and the Trust at heart, and that we have a common purpose even when we may disagree about methods; conflict can be constructive if handled professionally.

Staff should follow the accepted professional practice of raising concerns or criticism directly with the colleague concerned, with the objective of a positive resolution. Dealing with a concern interpersonally to resolve an issue is preferable and helps maintain positive working relationships. Until the colleague is informed of concerns, one cannot assume that from their perspective they are aware there has been an issue. Public discussions, or criticism of a colleague, exacerbate problems and can lead to formal disputes or grievances. Please refer to the Grievance policy for further information.

Staff should clearly not discuss matters relating to a colleague with children and young people. This covers professional and private issues. Distress can be caused by well-intentioned, but misguided, information, e.g. telling children and young people a member of staff is leaving or pregnant, or of their home circumstances, is not acceptable.

In order to maintain professional boundaries, line management arrangements between employees who are relatives, personal friends or significant others are discouraged. This also applies where employees form relationships before or after employment commences. In all cases, staff should disclose this to the Headteacher (or the Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees) so that the most appropriate alternative line management arrangements can be determined, and potential conflicts of interest addressed.

Some staff may be employed by parents as a Personal Assistant for their child; staff must always be mindful of breaches of confidentiality and not share personal information about the child/other children/staff with the parent. If a parent is seeking further information the staff member must direct all enquiries to the Head teacher, informing the head of such requests.

Staff are discouraged from contacting parents outside of the formal systems identified by the Trust; this includes the use of social media; if staff members are in contact with parents via social media, they are encouraged to provide such details to the Headteacher. Any communication with parents that brings the school/Trust into disrepute with parents will be investigated by the Trust which could result in disciplinary action taken.

10. Standards of behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work. There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and

confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

This means that staff should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model
- make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or use inappropriate language to or in the presence of children and young people
- discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of children and young people
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.

This means that staff should:

- inform the Headteacher or specified person of any cautions, convictions, or relevant orders accrued during their employment, and/or if they are charged with a criminal offence
- be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they have a relationship or association, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children
- inform the Headteacher of any name changes that they have not previously declared.

11. Bullying and harassment

The Trust wants to maintain an environment which allows children, young people and staff to flourish and achieve their full potential and to work and participate in the Trust's life. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and intimidation will not be tolerated, and disciplinary action may be taken, if a member of staff engages in such practices. Please refer to the Grievance policy and Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy for further information.

12. Dress code

Staff should dress in a professional, safe and appropriate manner for their role. Requirements will be applied fairly and objectively, taking account of health and safety considerations, reasonable adjustments, protected characteristics, religious observance and operational requirements.

This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- promotes a smart, positive and professional image;
- is appropriate to their role;
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or provocative;
- does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding;
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans;
- is not considered to be discriminatory;
- is compliant with professional standards;
- in online engagement, is similar to the clothing they would wear on a normal school day.

All employees are expected to be a role model for all children and young people in terms of their dress. Staff should ensure safety uniform is adhered to e.g. PE, catering and site staff.

Examples of inappropriate dress are:

- Low cut tops or dresses (midriff should be covered);
- Mid-thigh or shorter length skirts or dresses;
- Beach wear (unless they are worn for structured teaching/learning sessions – e.g. – PE/Swimming)
- All denim including coloured denim and jeans;
- 'Spaghetti' or strappy tops.

Footwear needs to be smart and suitable for the health and safety of the role being undertaken. 'Flip-flop' style shoes and open toed shoes are not suitable.

In addition, leggings/jeggings/treggings must be smart. Clothing must adequately cover all undergarments.

(This list is not exhaustive).

Hair, when long should always be tied back (if it can be tied back it should be); piercings need to be small (studs not hoops) and able to be removed from the body easily to lessen any likelihood of injury if a child or young person grabs/pulls.

Fingernails should be of an acceptable, practical length and not impact upon the safe working practice with our children and young people and not impede any interactions with them, e.g. moving and handling, restraint or restrictive intervention. False nails should not be worn for cosmetic reasons.

Where an employee's post requires a different form of dress because of the practical nature of their work, this will be confirmed by their line manager. If unsure, staff should seek the advice/guidance of their line manager. Line managers will support their staff by giving feedback, advice and guidance on any aspect of the dress code, where necessary.

Employees may wear appropriate religious and cultural dress (including clerical collars, head scarves, skullcaps and turbans) unless it creates a health and safety risk to them or any other person or otherwise breaches this code.

Where necessary the employee's HR Department can give further information and guidance on cultural and religious dress in the workplace.

Priority is at all times given to health and safety requirements. Where necessary, advice will be taken from the Health and Safety Officer.

13. Mobile phones please refer to the SPT Mobile Device and Personal Call policy

Communication with children (including the use of technology) -also see ICT Acceptable Use policy

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, children and young people need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

Staff should:

- not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with children and young people outside of the purposes of their work;
- not give out their personal details;
- use only the equipment and internet services provided by the school or setting, (see policy for exceptions);
- only use internet-enabled personal devices in line with school acceptable use policies;
- follow their school / setting's Acceptable Use policy and online safety guidance;
- ensure that their use of technologies could not bring their employer into disrepute;
- not discuss or share data relating to children, parents / carers in staff social media groups.

14. Physical contact (Also see your setting's Behaviour policy)

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child or young person's individual needs and any agreed care plan. Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the child or young person's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.

Staff should acknowledge that some children and young people are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. 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 and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child or young person.

A general culture of 'safe touch' should be adopted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday living. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child or young person's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Also see Intimate Care Policy.

This means that staff should:

- be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child or young person, an observer or any person to whom this action is described (for example, if a child needs comforting, sit alongside them - not on your lap);
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child or young person;
- never touch a child or young person in a way which may be considered indecent;

- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny;
- never indulge in horseplay or fun fights;
- always allow/encourage children and young people, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently;
- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed child or young person is age appropriate;
- establish the preferences of children and young people, consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child or young person might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact;
- always explain to the child or young person the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- report and record situations which may give rise to concern;
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender.

Staff may physically intervene (but are not expected to do so, if they believe they may be injured in the process; sending for help is an appropriate alternative) with children and young people to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and maintain good order and discipline. Physical force must never be used as a form of punishment. Staff will always be guided by the principles of the DfE's guidance of reasonable force in schools and the Trust's and school level behaviour policies. Please refer to the SPT and school websites.

Other activities that require physical contact

In certain curriculum areas, such as PE, drama or music, staff may need to initiate some physical contact with children, for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e., one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary.

This means that staff should:

- treat children and young people with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body;
- always explain to a child or young person the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take;
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child or young person might misinterpret any such contact;
- be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols;
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others;
- be aware of gender, cultural and religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact.

15. Moving and Handling

All staff must read and adhere to the Trust's Moving and Handling policy.

Every employee in the building is responsible for reinforcing the safe movement and behaviour of children and young people around the school at all times; the SPT Moving and Handling and Behaviour policies outline the guidance/protocols required.

Any issue of concern, malfunctioning equipment or danger must be reported to the Premises Lead of the school immediately. Under no circumstances should children and young people be put at risk by expecting them to work outside safe parameters – e.g. - carry too much, stand on chairs or tables, paint walls or ceilings etc. Staff must ensure that there are no trip hazards or sharp objects, dangerous chemicals or equipment that may cause injury.

Staff employed within our Trust will:

- Take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts and omissions;
- Use the agreed SPT documents for completion of risk assessments, moving and handling passports and SOPs across the school. Use/monitor the use of agreed recording sheets which demonstrate how competencies/compliances are being adhered to;
- Report to the appropriate line manager any medical condition (temporary or permanent) that may develop (including pregnancy) which may affect their ability to carry out moving and handling tasks;
- Report to the appropriate line manager any problems or unsafe practice that (within their level of competence) they consider to be a risk to health and safety including any equipment faults or the working practice of colleagues if/as necessary;
- Fully consider the school's Whistleblowing policy/Low Level Concern/Safeguarding policies if they witness any aspect of moving and handling that they know to be outside of the training received. If any member of staff fails to disclose the observation of poor practice by colleagues, the SPT will refer to the Disciplinary policy to determine how such behaviour will be addressed;
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes;
- Co-operate with the employer to allow the employer to comply with health and safety duties;
- Use equipment appropriately in accordance with training and instructions provided;
- Follow the handling plans/moving and handling passport drawn up for each child which outlines the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which must be followed;
- Comply with the Moving and Handling policy;
- Participate/undertake any specified training to fulfil their duties;
- Not carry out moving and handling procedures without appropriate advice/training;
- Report any accident or incident to the appropriate line manager and complete the accident book within 24 hours;
- Report any faulty lifting equipment immediately to the appropriate line manager;
- Assess an emergency situation first without rushing in to lift a child or young person. If the child or young person has fallen, wherever possible the member of staff should reassure the child or young person and get help if necessary (First Aid Assistance).

16. Intimate / personal care

All staff must read and adhere to the Trust Intimate Care policy. Arrangements for intimate and personal care should be open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Children and young people should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is possible and practicable. When assistance is required, this should normally be undertaken by one member of staff, however, they should try to ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity who is aware of the task to be undertaken and that, wherever possible, they are visible and/or audible. Intimate or personal care procedures should not involve more than one member of staff unless the child or young person's intimate care plan specifies the reason for this.

A signed record should be kept of all intimate and personal care tasks undertaken and, where these have been carried out in another room, should include times left and returned. Schools will ensure that appropriate risk assessments, procedures and systems are in place to support children and young people and staff should the policy not be practical to implement in a particular setting. Any vulnerability, including those that may arise from a physical or learning difficulty should be considered when formulating the individual child or young person's care plan. The views of parents, carers and the child or young person, regardless of their age and understanding, should be actively sought in formulating the plan and in the necessary regular reviews of these arrangements. Any changes to the intimate care plan should be made in writing and without delay, even if the change in arrangements is temporary; e.g. staff shortages, changes to staff rotas.

Intimate and personal care should not be carried out by an adult that the child does not know. All individuals undertaking intimate / personal care in an education setting are carrying out a regulated activity and must have been checked against the relevant DBS barred list, even if the activity only happens once; this includes volunteers. Volunteers and visiting staff from other schools /agencies should not undertake care procedures without appropriate training.

This means that staff should:

- adhere to our Intimate and Personal Care policy and make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
always explain to the child or young person what is happening before a care procedure begins;
- consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary;
- record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with the child or young person and their parents/carers avoid any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering;
- always consider the supervision needs of the children and young people and only remain in the room where their needs require this.

17. First Aid and Medication

Please ensure you read the school or setting's First Aid policy and guidance on managing medications in schools.

Advice on managing medicines is included in the statutory guidance on supporting children and young people at school with medical conditions. In circumstances where a child or young person needs medication regularly, this would usually be recorded in their individual healthcare plan. This provides details of the level and type of support a child needs to manage effectively their medical condition in school and should include information about the medicine to be administered, the correct dosage and any storage requirements.

All adults should:

- Only administer medication once they have been trained and deemed as competent to do so adhere to the school or setting's health and safety, supporting children and young people with medical conditions policies and First Aid policy;
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken;
- have regard and read children and young people individual healthcare plans;
- always ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities;
- explain to the child or young person what is happening;
- always act and be seen to act in the child or young person's best interest;
- make a record of all medications administered;
- ensure that medication is stored as per the Managing Medication policy;
- not work with children and young people whilst taking medication that may impair their judgement unless medical advice confirms that they are able to do so.

18. Photography, videos and other images / media

Please also refer to the Trust's Safeguarding policy.

Many educational activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken for displays, publicity, to celebrate achievement and to provide records of evidence of the activity. Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of children and young people at or on behalf of the school or setting. There are clear arrangements with regard to the taking and use of images, which is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

This means that staff should:

- adhere to our policies;
- only publish images of children and young people where they and their parent/carer have given explicit written consent to do so;
- only take images where the child or young person is happy for them to do so;
only retain images when there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so;
- store images in an appropriate secure place in the school or setting;
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose be able to justify images of children and young people in their possession
avoid making images in one-to-one situations;

This means that adults should not:

- take images of children and young people for their personal use;
- display or distribute images of children and young people unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so (and, where appropriate, consent from the child);
- take images of children using personal equipment;
- take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress;
- take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children's social care;
- make audio recordings of a child's disclosure;
- take images of children which could be considered as indecent or sexual.

For the protection of children, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed:

- if the image is used, avoid naming the child, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames);
- if the child is named, avoid using their image;
- schools and settings should establish whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

19. Use of technology for online / virtual teaching

Please also refer to our Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use policies.

Virtual lessons should be timetabled and senior staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be able to drop into any virtual lesson at any time – the online version of entering a classroom.

Staff should:

- adhere to the Trust's policy;
- be appropriately dressed;
- ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the online lesson / meeting is taking place and for what purpose;
- avoid one to one situations – request that a parent is present in the room for the duration, or ask a colleague or member of SLT to join the session;
- only record a lesson or online meetings with a child or young person where this has been agreed with the Headteacher or other senior staff member, and the child or young person and their parent / carer have given explicit written consent to do so;
- be able to justify images of children and young people in their possession.

This means that adults should not:

- contact children and young people outside of school hours;
- take or record images of children and young people for their personal use;
- record virtual lessons or meetings using personal equipment (unless agreed and risk assessed by senior staff);

- engage online while children are in a state of undress or semi-undress.

20. Exposure to inappropriate images

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images. There are no circumstances that will justify adults making, downloading, possessing, or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the setting's equipment or personal equipment (including electronic devices) on or off the premises, or making, storing, or disseminating such material is illegal. If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school or setting's equipment and /or electronic device(s) an immediate referral should be made to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) and the Police contacted if relevant.

The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social care in line with local arrangements.

Staff must not:

- Under any circumstance use school or setting equipment to access pornography;
- Bring in or use any personal equipment and / or device(s) containing pornography (or links to it). This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue working with children and young people. Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment and / or device(s). In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network, and the LADO contacted without delay;
- Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility that they will be at risk of prosecution themselves.

21. Personal living accommodation including onsite provision (where applicable)

Generally, staff should not invite any children and young people into their living accommodation unless the reason to do so has been firmly established and agreed with their manager and the child or young person's parents/carers.

This means that staff should:

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy, including when living in on-site accommodation;
- be mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations;
- refuse any request for their accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the school or setting;
- be mindful of the need to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries;
- not ask children and young people to undertake jobs or errands for their personal benefit.

22. Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with children and young people to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. drama. Staff should also always comply with the policy for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) promoting healthy relationships.

Staff should not:

- enter into or encourage inappropriate discussions which may offend or harm others;
- undermine fundamental British values (i.e. democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs);
- express any prejudicial views;
- attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on children and young people inclusive of an understanding of consent.

It should be noted that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from the National Curriculum for Science.

This means that staff should:

- have clear written lesson plans and ensure that content is appropriate to the children's age and cognitive development;
- take care, when encouraging children and young people to use self-expression, not to overstep personal and professional boundaries be able to justify all curriculum materials and relate these to clearly identifiable lessons plans.

23. Safeguarding

Every member of staff has been issued with the latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document. Staff must ensure that they read and sign to indicate they understand the document and the Child Protection policy of their school and, must always adhere to the guidance in these policies. Regular training will be provided.

All staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" when considering safeguarding concerns and should always act in the best interests of children. Staff should exercise professional curiosity and understand that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

If an employee has any concerns regarding child protection, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead of the respective school. If the Designated Lead is not available, staff must seek the guidance from the deputy Designated Lead identified in each of our schools.

If a child tells a member of staff or an employee gets to hear (even via other children and young people) about a matter of abuse (sexual, emotional and/or physical) or sexual misdemeanour or any other matter of concern, they are obliged to pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the setting without informing the parents/carers or asking for permission. The relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult the LADO/Social Services and follow advice. All matters must be referred. CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) is our electronic way of storing and reporting all concerns. All child protection matters will be reported to the Governing body via the Headteacher's report.

All staff should be aware of and have read the Trust's/school's safeguarding procedures, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, including agency staff and volunteers, and for reporting low level concerns. In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded on CPOMS and reported to the Headteacher, Senior Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate. Members of staff should discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards children and young people so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken. In order to safeguard and protect children and young people and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with children they should immediately report this to the Headteacher. All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.

The Safeguarding policy and Low-Level Concerns policy will guide all staff on how to act in the event of **any** safeguarding concern; a copy of these can be found on each schools'/SPT website.

Staff must:

- be familiar with their settings safeguarding policies and arrangements for reporting and recording concerns and allegations;
- know how to contact the relevant Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU)/ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), their Designated Safeguarding Lead and LADO;
- take responsibility for recording any incident and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the school or setting. This includes low level staff/adult concerns.

Please also refer to the Trust Prevent policy for information explaining the duty of staff members to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

24. Duty to report concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children

There is a duty to report (including self-reporting) any incident in which an adult has or may have behaved in a way that is inconsistent with the organisation's staff Code of Conduct including inappropriate behaviours inside, outside of work or online. Staff should recognise their individual responsibility to raise any concerns regarding behaviour or conduct (including low level concerns) that falls short of the principles outlined in this document and any other policies. It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see KCSIE), are shared responsibly and with the

Headteacher, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Failure to report or respond to such concerns would constitute a failure in professional responsibilities to safeguard children and promote welfare.

As a Trust, we prioritise ensuring the culture enables staff to feel comfortable discussing safeguarding matters in and outside of work, including online. This includes raising concerns about any third party organisations we work alongside.

Whistleblowing is a mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion in circumstances where their concerns have not been dealt with or they do not feel able to follow usual reporting lines for some reason. Staff who use whistleblowing procedures should have their employment rights protected.

This means that staff should:

- escalate their concerns if they believe a child or children are not being protected;
- report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern;
- report allegations against staff and volunteers to the head teacher or senior manager, or wherever they have concerns;
- follow the organisation's whistleblowing procedures as appropriate;
- where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should utilise other whistleblowing channels that are open to them as outlined in KCSIE.

The NSPCC's 'what you can do to report abuse' dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college.

How to contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line:

- The Whistleblowing Advice Line is available from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-6pm at the weekend. Call 0800 028 0285; or
- Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

25. Low level staff concerns

Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including those that do not meet the threshold of an allegation) are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should encourage a more open and transparent culture; enable individual schools to identify concerning behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working within our Trust are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of The Special Partnership Trust.

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children but is however inappropriate. The Special Partnership Trust is committed to cultivating a culture of staff being able to, in a safe and professional manner, challenge behaviours that cause offense or cause an atmosphere of feeling uncomfortable. Any member of staff who has a concern about the action(s) of another member of staff,

volunteer or contractor, or who on reflection, recognises that their own actions could have been viewed as concerning should inform the Headteacher.

What is a Low-Level Concern (LLC)?

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at paragraph 338 (and on page four of the full policy in the red box). A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' –

Low Level Concern - Any adult linked to our school who has behaved in a way that:

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

The Headteacher (or senior staff member that this task has been delegated to) will discuss:

- what changes needs to be made;
- agree a support plan if required;
- any further action;
- consequences of repeated behaviour/actions;
- time scale (normally immediate).

The Headteacher will be mindful of disguised compliance, where the staff member says what is required but minimises said behaviours/actions and little changes.

The member of staff will be directed not to discuss with colleagues and attempt to investigate where the reported concern came from.

For full details please refer to the SPT Low Level Concerns Policy.

Please remember this policy is focused at keeping children, community, and staff safe and it about trying to cultivate a culture of staff being able to, in a safe and professional manner, challenge behaviours that cause offense or cause an atmosphere of feeling uncomfortable.

26. Behaviour – children and young people

Corporal punishment and smacking are unlawful in all schools and education settings. Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children is completely unacceptable.

Staff must recognise that children can abuse other children and that such abuse can occur both inside and outside school, online and offline. Reports of sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and other forms of child-on-child abuse must always be taken seriously and responded to in

accordance with the Trust's safeguarding procedures. Such behaviour must never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up, harmless behaviour or accepted as a normal part of children's relationships.

Staff are encouraged to self-report where they believe their behaviour may have fallen below expected standards. Self-reporting demonstrates openness and professional accountability and will be considered as part of any assessment of the concern.

Staff should understand the importance of identifying, challenging and responding appropriately to inappropriate behaviours between peers in order to maintain a safe environment and protect children from harm.

This means that staff should:

- not use force as a form of punishment;
- try to defuse situations before they escalate e.g. by distraction;
- keep parents informed of any sanctions or behaviour management techniques used;
- be mindful of and sensitive to factors both inside and outside of the school or setting which may impact on a child or young person's behaviour;
- follow the setting's behaviour management policy;
- behave as a role model at all times;
- avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation;
- refer to and adhere to national and local policy and guidance regarding Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI);
- be aware of the legislation and potential risks associated with the use of isolation and seclusion – This must be avoided at all times;
- comply with legislation and guidance in relation to human rights and restriction of liberty;
- read and agree to implement the Trust's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse;
- be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

27. Sexual conduct

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child or young person under 18 years of age and sexual activity with a child could be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

This means that staff should:

- not have any form of sexual contact with a child or young person from the school or setting;
- avoid any form of touch or comment which is, or may be considered to be, indecent;

- avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact;
- not make sexual remarks to or about a child or young person;
- not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of children and young people other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role.

28. One to one situations

There will be times where an employee is working one-to-one with a child or young person and this can be viewed as acceptable although staff need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. For this reason, it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas of the respective school;
- Ensure that the door of the room is open or that there is visual access into the room;
- Inform the line manager and/or colleague of the work/meeting, preferably beforehand;
- Report to their line manager, if the child or young person becomes distressed or angry.

To safeguard children, young people and adults, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work should always be undertaken. Each assessment should consider the individual needs of each child or young person and should be reviewed regularly. Arranging to meet with children and young people from the school or setting away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from a senior member of staff, the child or young person, and their parents/carers. Where staff are expected to work one to one with a child or young person on a virtual platform, clear expectations are set out for all of those involved are located in each setting's Remote Learning policy.

29. Home visits

All work with children and young people and parents should usually be undertaken in the school or setting or other recognised workplace. There are however, occasions in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation or job role, where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits; e.g., to undertake a welfare visit during school closures. A risk assessment should be undertaken prior to any planned home visit taking place. The assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child or young person, parents/carers and any others living in the household. Consideration should be given to any circumstances which might render the staff member becoming more vulnerable to an allegation being made e.g. hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances. Specific thought should be given to visits outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following the assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be put in place, before the visit is undertaken. In the unlikely event that little or no information is available, visits should not be made alone.

This means that staff should:

- agree the purpose for any home visit with their manager;

- have a clear understanding of the actions that should be taken if it is believed that a child or parent is at immediate risk of harm, including when to contact emergency services and / or partner agencies;
- adhere to agreed risk assessments;
- avoid unannounced visits wherever possible;
- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations;
- never enter a home without the parent or carer's consent or when the parent is absent, except in an emergency;
- always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure;
- ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with their manager;
- ensure that children are seen in open and observable spaces; for example, living rooms;
- Comply with data protection regulations in relation to any personal information carried or notes made about the child and/or family.

30. Transporting children and young people

In certain situations, staff or volunteers may be required or offer to transport children and young people as part of their work. As for any other activity undertaken at work, the employer has a duty to carry out a risk assessment covering the health and safety of their staff and to manage any known risks.

This means that staff should:

- plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance;
- respond sensitively and flexibly where any concerns arise;
- take into account any specific or additional needs of the child or young person;
- have an appropriate licence/permit for the vehicle;
- ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive;
- ensure that if they need to be alone with a child or young person this is for the minimum time. Staff should not travel alone with a child or young person and always have an additional adult in the vehicle;
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the child or young person is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer;
- report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures;
- ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven. This may require that the driver has 'business use' cover;
- ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified;
- refer to Local and National guidance for educational visits and the settings Educational Visits Policy.

31. Educational Visits

Where a member of staff is taking children and young people off site, they must follow the Educational Visits policy in advance. Prior to departure, they must ensure they have the required verification from the Headteacher/Educational Visits Lead with all supporting documentation in place. All staff must adhere to the protocols outlined in the educational visits policy to minimise any risk to staff/children and young people undertaking the educational visit taking with them the relevant consent forms and documents. It is the responsibility of the employees escorting the children and young people on the visit/day to check that the appropriate documents and consents are lodged as outlined. If any staff member is in any doubt, they are responsible for seeking additional advice and guidance from the school.

Staff responsible for organising educational visits should be familiar with the Department for Education's advice on Health and Safety available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educationalvisits>

This means that staff should:

- adhere to their setting's Educational Visits guidance/policy;
- always have another adult present on visits, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff;
- undertake risk assessments;
- have the appropriate consent in place (e.g. medical);
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times;
- never share beds with a child or young person;
- never share bedrooms unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed with Headteacher, parents and children and young people;
- refer to local and national guidance for educational visits, including exchange visits (both to the UK and abroad).

32. Image of the Trust

Communication

All written communication, e.g., letters, reports etc., must be of the highest standard. This also applies to e-mail communications with parents/carers and staff should be mindful to maintain a professional, formal dialogue when using this medium; any email sent to parents must be stored electronically or printed/stored in the child or young person's school file. Staff are asked to take particular care when in the office/reception areas to remember that conversations may be overheard by visitors or telephone callers. Written communication to parents/carers, children and young people and other external recipients must be approved by the Headteacher/SLT in its final version before it is sent.

Additionally, the Trust reserves the right to monitor, access and review communications sent and received in all formats, e.g. in writing and electronically, to safeguard against reputational risk and ensure appropriate communication is maintained.

Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

Answering the telephone

How the telephone is answered and queries are addressed reflects on how the Trust is perceived. Staff answering the telephone should ensure the query is answered appropriately and professionally. This may involve taking and/or recording the message appropriately and ensuring this is passed to the appropriate person.

To help a caller, staff should indicate who they are, and their role. If leaving a message on another phone, staff should provide this information. If a member of staff has left a message for a parent/carers, they must inform the main reception so that the return call can be put through to the correct member of staff.

If in an office where phones are being answered or at reception, staff should be aware of background noise and show consideration to other colleagues. It creates a poor impression to a member of the public if they can hear lots of background noise.

Texting, social networking, electronic and online expectations

It is essential for all staff to consider their use of social networking, including the use of texts, electronic communications and their presence on the internet. Individuals should be mindful of the image of themselves within a professional organisation; this includes their professional relationships with staff across the Trust in upholding the reputation/confidentiality of the Trust when engaged in communication verbally, online or electronically. Employees are responsible for checking carefully their online privacy settings in line with guidance issued on www.safeinternet.org.uk.

If pictures are taken of other adults whether on Trust premises or in social situations, employees should consider the image it projects and permission of any individuals featured must be secured before the images are shared in any form, whether on- or offline.

In line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, inappropriate, sexually explicit or compromising images have no place in a school environment. Staff should consider carefully against safeguarding expectations images and text on their own electronic devices. Whether in person, online, in writing, on the TV or radio or on the phone, staff should be sure that sensitive information is not inadvertently disclosed.

The Trust reserves the right to act on any information obtained from social media sources. If it indicates that an employee is using social media inappropriately, disciplinary action may be taken.

33. Private use of the internet

Using the internet for personal reasons/use should not be undertaken during work time. If employees wish to use the internet for private matters, they should do so during their break. Staff should be mindful of the images they publish online and the potential impact of such images on their professional reputation/reputation of the Trust/school; if any member of staff is in doubt of what is intended to be published they should seek the guidance of their line manager. Any internet use and content within the Trust and/or the Trust's equipment must be acceptable within the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection, ICT Acceptable Use policies and Online Safety guidance. Please also refer to www.safeinternet.org.uk.

Staff should not do anything to risk the integrity of the Trust's ICT systems. This includes the use of unauthorised hardware or unlicensed software on the Trust's system. Employees must not copy software products licensed to the Trust. Please refer to the ICT Acceptable Use policy for further information.

34. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Staff must use artificial intelligence technologies responsibly and in accordance with Trust policies. Personal, confidential, safeguarding or special category data must not be entered into public AI platforms unless expressly authorised and appropriate safeguards are in place. Staff remain professionally accountable for all decisions, communications, reports, assessments and materials produced with the assistance of AI tools

35. Relationships with the media

If an employee is approached by the media, they should take details about the enquiry and contact the Headteacher or the Trust CEO. Staff should not engage in conversation with journalists and be pressurised with claims of a deadline needing to be met. If a member of staff notices someone filming, photographing and/or recording outside the academy, they should contact the Headteacher immediately.

Although not exhaustive, staff should not do the following on behalf of the Trust without written consent from the Headteacher (or Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees):

- Write to the media directly or in conjunction with others;
- Write or contribute toward media articles;
- Produce multimedia footage for any purposes about the Trust and its activities.

If an employee is invited to present at a conference or write an article by virtue of their connection with the Trust, prior written permission and editorial oversight must be sought from the Headteacher (or the Trust CEO). Any payment received for such activities must be paid to the Trust.

Employees should be mindful when conducting any of the above activities that they do not represent the Trust as a spokesperson. If employees are unsure about dealing with the media, they should contact Headteacher for the School or the Trust CEO.

36. Confidentiality and GDPR

Employees may in the course of their duty obtain information which is confidential. They must not pass on any information received or obtained through their employment to anyone who is not entitled to have that information. Staff must follow the data handling and management protocols and policy for their respective academy at all times.

Staff may have access to special category personal data about children and young people and their families which must always be kept confidential and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in

the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff will be expected to work within the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Employees must not misuse their position by seeking information which they do not need to know to carry out their duties. When leaving the employment of the Trust, they must adhere to and sign the data declaration.

If employees are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

Staff must report any concerns about other staff to a senior member of staff.

37. Finance and procurement

The Trust is independent from the Local Authority, state-funded schools which receive their funding directly from central government. Staff must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to achieve value for money.

Finance staff, budget holders and all employees involved in financial activities and transactions on behalf of the Trust are required to read, understand and follow the Finance Policy and Procedures. All employees will ensure compliance by e.g. raising purchase orders, submitting accurate expenses claims in a timely manner etc.

Employees involved in the awarding of contracts must avoid potential conflicts of interest and must not be involved in decisions where they have a connection to the organisation or individual bidding for work.

38. Criminal charges and convictions

Employees must notify the Headteacher at their school (or the Trust CEO or the Chair of Trustees) without unreasonable delay if they become subject to any police investigation, arrest, charge, caution, conviction, court order, safeguarding measure, regulatory sanction, prohibition order, disqualification or any other matter that may affect their suitability to work with children or undertake their role.

Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken and potentially dismissal.

39. Other employment

During the period of employment, employees are required to devote their full time, attention and abilities to their duties and to act in the best interests of the Trust.

Accordingly, they must not undertake any employment or engagement (also whilst off-duty), which might interfere with the performance of their duties, conflict with the interests of the Trust or have implications for their own health and safety or for that of their children and young people and/or colleagues.

Staff are required to declare such employment or engagement and obtain written consent prior to engaging in any business or appointment from the Headteacher at their school (or the Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees).

All members of staff must ensure that Trust time and equipment are not utilised in connection with any other employment.

40. Political activity

The Trust must remain politically neutral and not be linked, directly or indirectly, to any political organisation. Employees are free to join political groups, apart from discriminatory organisations, secret societies or illegal political organisations.

41. References and Employment Information

The Trust is committed to providing fair, accurate and timely employment references for current and former employees.

All requests for employment references relating to current or former employees should be referred to the Headteacher or to the Trust HR Team, who will coordinate and issue references in accordance with Trust procedures and safer recruitment requirements. References will not be unreasonably delayed or withheld.

Employees must not provide an employment reference on behalf of the Trust unless authorised to do so. Where appropriate, HR may seek information from a Headteacher, line manager or other relevant senior leader to support the preparation of a reference.

Occasionally, employees may be asked to provide a personal reference for a colleague. Personal references must not:

- be provided on Trust or school letterhead;
- be sent from a Trust email account; or
- imply that the views expressed represent those of the Trust.

Any personal reference should clearly state that it is provided in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Trust.

42. Health, safety and security

All employees have a responsibility to secure a healthy and safe environment for all children and young people and staff. Everyone is responsible for their own health, safety and welfare and should have due

regard for the health, safety and welfare of others. Please refer to the Health & Safety policy for further information.

Staff are expected to wear their staff badge/lanyard at all times and, ensure the security of the Trust's premises with the appropriate use of and storage of key and fob. If an employee misplaces/loses their key, fob or badge, they must report this immediately to the Premises Lead and the Headteacher of their school. If keys/fobs/badges are found unattended, these must be immediately handed into the main reception of the respective school, who will seek to inform the member of staff, if identifiable and/or the Premises Lead as appropriate.

Any member of staff leaving the Trust's premises during the working day should inform the main reception of their respective school that they are going off site and confirm that they are back upon their return; they should also advise reception if they are not returning after their appointment. Employees should also sign in/out at reception so that they can be accounted for in case of emergency.

Where staff have visitors on site, it is their responsibility to ensure that the visitors are escorted at all times, if they have a red lanyard. The red lanyard symbolises that the visitor does not have DBS clearance and therefore must be supervised at all times. If a visitor with a red lanyard is found unescorted on the Trust's premises, they should be escorted back to the main reception of the respective school.

Health and safety checks are conducted regularly by approved contractors on all equipment where there is a need. Electrical PAT tests are conducted to ensure electrical equipment is safe to use. Staff must ensure that electrical equipment is visually checked prior to use to ensure that it has no damage and it has a valid 'passed' label.

If an employee has any concerns, they should not use the equipment and put a label on it so that others do not use it. The Premises Lead should be notified accordingly. Staff cannot use electrical equipment that they have brought in from home unless it has a valid PAT test.

Employees must fulfil any additional health and safety duties in line with their role and responsibilities as outlined in the Health & Safety policy and their job description.

43. Smoking

All premises of the Trust are non-smoking and 'non-vaporising' sites. Therefore, staff and children and young people are expected not to smoke/use a vaporiser on site.

44. Alcohol and substance misuse

It is not permitted to consume alcohol or any illegal substances on Trust premises and to be under their influence during work hours. Therefore, it is a disciplinary offence to be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal substances whilst at work or when representing the Trust, or if it is believed to have affected an employee's ability to conduct their duties.

The Trust expressly prohibits the use of any illegal drugs (including psychoactive substances, formerly known as 'legal highs'), or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user, if they impair the judgement or are abused.

It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illegal drug, or to produce, supply or possess these with the intent to supply illegal drugs. If any such incidents take place on Trust premises, in Trust vehicles or at a Trust function, they will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken and reporting to the police.

Staff must inform their line manager in confidence regarding any prescribed medication that may influence their ability to carry out their work safely and/or to care for or supervise children and young people in their care. They should seek medical advice before continuing to take such medication and discuss the advice received from their GP or Occupational Health with their line manager or another appropriate manager. Managers must ensure that affected employees only work directly with children and young people if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair the employee's ability to look after children and young people properly.

Staff medication, personal belongings i.e. handbags, etc must be kept out of reach of children and young people at all times in lockers / locked storage. The Trust takes no liability for personal belongings that go missing on Trust property if it is not stored correctly.

Staff suffering from drug and/or alcohol dependency are encouraged to declare these to the Headteacher (or the Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees) or HR. The Trust will aim to signpost them to appropriate support services.

45. Gifts and hospitality

Staff should not receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for doing (or not doing) anything or showing favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.

If an employee becomes aware of potentially dishonest or fraudulent activities by others, they have a duty to report this to the relevant Headteacher (or the Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees). Please refer to the Whistleblowing policy for further information.

If a member of staff is offered or receives gifts and/or hospitality, they should not put themselves under an obligation that might influence future decisions or conduct. Please see below for general guidelines:

- Employees should be careful to ensure that the receipt of hospitality could not be construed as a way of exerting improper influence over them or the Trust;
- As a general rule, you should not accept hospitality that would not be reciprocated by the Trust in similar circumstances. Employees should be cautious when accepting hospitality and ensure it is appropriated and not too lavish;
- Personal gifts or vouchers from children and young people should be recorded in the 'Trust Gift Register' and should not be excessive/significant in value;

- It is not permitted to accept cash under any circumstances;
- Offers of hospitality and gifts, which an employee considers accepting, must be recorded in the appropriate register;
- When declining hospitality or gifts, staff should be courteous and refer the person making the offer to this code;
- If you have any doubt about gifts/hospitality offered, you must seek advice from your line manager at the earliest opportunity and in reasonable time.

There are occasions when children and young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff; e.g., at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to children and young people or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a child or young person should be in accordance with agreed practice, consistent with the school or setting's Behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism. Adults should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when children and young people are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

46. Trust and personal property

Employees are reminded that they have a duty of care with regards to Trust property in their possession inside or outside of work. Every action must be taken to safeguard the security and integrity of this property by the member of staff. Negligence on the part of the employee may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Where due diligence in relation to security or safety of Trust property has not been taken or Trust property has not been treated with care, employees are advised that the Trust's insurance may not cover the item concerned and staff would be expected to claim on their own insurance or cover the costs to replace/repair the item. It is essential that any loss or theft is reported to a member of the Finance team.

The Trust assumes no responsibility for any personal items or possessions lost or damaged on any of its premises. Staff should ensure that they do not bring unnecessary or unsuitable items into the workplace and it is recommended that any risk to personal property is covered by private insurance.

47. Intellectual property and copyright

All intellectual property rights, such as copyright, design rights and the right to patent inventions, relating to anything created or invented by employees in the course of their duties automatically belong to the Trust. Staff cannot exploit rights to these without written permission from the Trust CEO.

The Trust may agree to their individual schools' collaborating with other academies/schools to create or invent intellectual property; this is subject to Trust CEO approval.

Staff may use and print copies of items which are the Trust's intellectual property for their personal and non-commercial use only provided that all copyright notices remain intact. However, they should not share these items with individuals/organisations outside of the Trust without the permission of the Headteacher of the school (or the Trust CEO, Chair of Trustees).

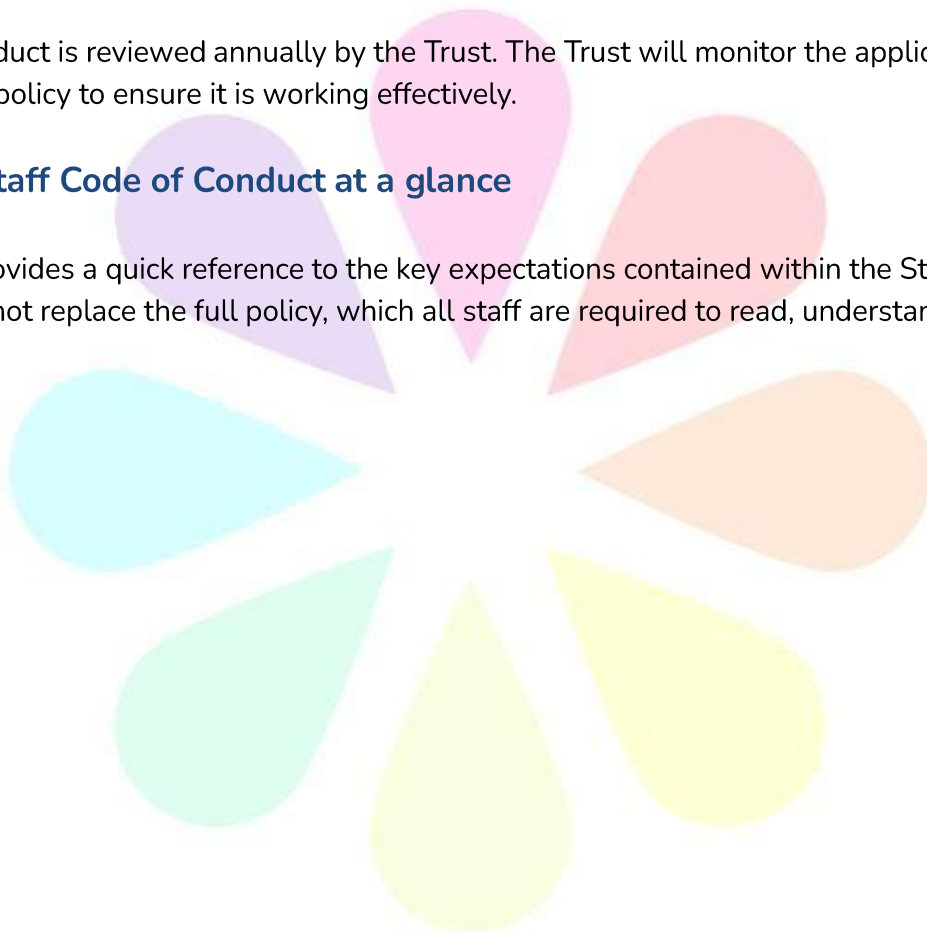
Employees are required to return all intellectual property of the Trust prior to leaving the organisations for any reason. Please contact HR for further information.

Review of this policy

This Code of Conduct is reviewed annually by the Trust. The Trust will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix 1: Staff Code of Conduct at a glance

This summary provides a quick reference to the key expectations contained within the Staff Code of Conduct. It does not replace the full policy, which all staff are required to read, understand and follow.



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT: KEY EXPECTATIONS

Safeguarding Responsibility

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Report concerns about adults, including low-level concerns, promptly.
- Recognise and report child-on-child abuse.
- Follow safeguarding procedures and KCSIE requirements.
- Wear identification and challenge unknown visitors.
- Maintain vigilance and a culture of safeguarding at all times.

Social Media and Online Conduct

- Think before posting online.
- Never share confidential Trust, staff or pupil information.
- Do not connect with current pupils through personal social media accounts.
- Ensure online activity does not bring the Trust into disrepute.
- Follow the Trust's Acceptable Use and Online Safety policies.

Conduct, Behaviour and Respect

- Promote a positive and inclusive culture.
- Challenge discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Dress professionally.
- Be respectful in all interactions.
- Follow School/Trust policies and procedures.
- Lead by example in behaviour and professionalism.

Professional Standards

- Act with honesty, integrity and professionalism.
- Maintain clear professional boundaries and your position of trust.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and favouritism.
- Treat colleagues, pupils and families with dignity and respect.
- Uphold the reputation of your school/the Trust at work and outside work.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Handle information securely and confidentially.
- Access information only where there is a legitimate business need.
- Follow UK GDPR and School/Trust Data Protection procedures.
- Secure documents and devices appropriately.
- Report data breaches immediately.

Gifts, Hospitality and Conflicts of Interest

- Declare gifts, hospitality and business interests where required.
- Do not accept inducements or inappropriate gifts.
- Maintain transparency and accountability.
- Avoid situations that could compromise professional judgement.
- Seek advice when unsure.

Use of Technology

- Use school/Trust systems responsibly.
- Use approved platforms and communication channels only.
- Keep personal and professional use separate.
- Never use personal devices to photograph pupils.
- Use AI responsibly and protect confidential data.
- Report online safety concerns promptly.

Relationships and Communication

- Use professional and appropriate language.
- Communicate with pupils only through approved systems.
- Do not develop personal or inappropriate relationships with pupils or families.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Report any concerns regarding professional conduct.
- Speak up and use whistleblowing procedures where necessary.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- Follow Health and Safety procedures.
- Take reasonable care of yourself and others.
- Report accidents, hazards and near misses.
- Attend work fit for duty.
- No smoking/vaping on school grounds.
- Support a culture of wellbeing across the Trust.

Remember:

If in doubt, stop, make the situation safe, seek advice from your line manager, Headteacher or DSL, and record concerns appropriately.

This summary should be read alongside the full Staff Code of Conduct and associated Trust policies.

Appendix 2: Statutory and Professional Framework

This Code has been developed with reference to the following legislation, statutory guidance and professional standards:

Safeguarding and Education

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Children Act 1989 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>
- Children Act 2004 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- Education Act 2002 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

Positions of Trust and Safer Working Practice

- Sexual Offences Act 2003 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents>

Employment and Equality

- Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- Employment Rights Act 1996 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents>
- ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures <https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-for-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures>
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/23/contents>

Information Governance

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2016/679/contents>
- Data Protection Act 2018 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

Health and Safety

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>

Professional Guidance

- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings <https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org>

Employee Declaration

The declaration must be signed by all employees.

By signing this declaration, I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Staff Code of Conduct and its associated expectations while carrying out my duties and when representing the Trust. I understand that I am responsible for maintaining the professional standards set out within this document and that, if I am unsure how the Code applies in a particular situation, I will seek advice from my line manager, Headteacher, DSL (or the Trust CEO for Headteachers and Central Office Staff or the Board of Trustees for the Trust CEO).

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____