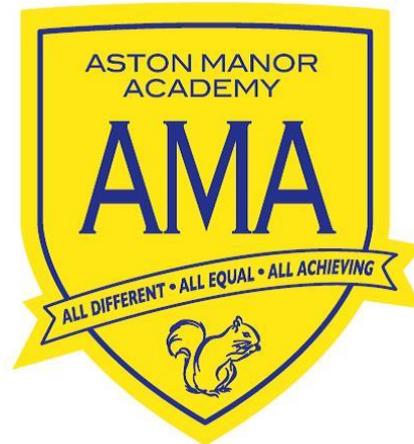


## EQUITAS ACADEMIES TRUST



**Chilwell Croft**  
Academy

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

**Review Date:** July 2018  
**To be Reviewed:** July 2021  
**Agreed:** Headteacher  
**Policy Lead:** Zoe Donnelly

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The aim of this Code of Conduct for employees is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide further information for employees. This should be read in conjunction with the Trust's disciplinary procedure and the Teachers' Standards (for teaching staff).

This Code should make clear to employees the expectations the Trust has of them. Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team.

This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

### **2. SCOPE**

The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to agency workers and self-employed contractors although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.

As recognisable figures in the local community the behaviour and conduct of staff of the Trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore conduct outside work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN**

All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.

All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.

To do this employees must have fully read and understood the Trust's safeguarding policy, the DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education document, be aware of the systems for keeping children safe and must follow the guidance in these policies at all times. All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary and are expected to complete online safeguarding training.

### **4. DUTY OF CARE**

Staff must:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached

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- Always act, and be seen to act, in students' best interests
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

### **5. HEALTH & SAFETY**

All employees must ensure that they:

- Familiarise themselves with Health and Safety requirements as outlined by the Trust
- Read and understand the Trust's Health and Safety Policy
- Comply with Health and Safety Regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing supplied to them
- Comply with any hygiene requirements
- Comply with any accident reporting requirements
- Never act in a way which might cause risk or damage to any other members of the Trust community or visitors
- Inform their line manager of any paid work undertaken elsewhere. This is to comply with the Working Time Regulations, which are a Health and Safety initiative.

### **6. HONESTY AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY**

Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct at the Trust.

Employees uphold public trust in the Academy at which they work and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside the Academy, by:

- Treating students, parents/carers, colleagues and outside agencies with dignity at all times, building relationships rooted in mutual respect
- Having regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Trust and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.

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

### **7. TACKLING DISCRIMINATION**

Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood the Trust's equality policies.

Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination. This includes inappropriate jokes and banter. Employees must positively promote equality, diversity and inclusion at all times.

## **8. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

Employees are in a position of trust in relation to the students they teach which means that the relationship between an employee and a student is not one of equals.

Employees must ensure that they avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. This includes any type of communication that they may have with students.

Employees must not make sexual remarks to any student or discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students. Employees must not discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts. **Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards any student is unacceptable and illegal.**

Employees must ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times. This means that employees should not show favouritism to any student and should not allow students to engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen to be inappropriate. Students are not employees' friends and should not be treated as such.

Employees should be aware that it is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to a member of staff or to develop an infatuation. If any member of staff becomes aware of an infatuation they should discuss it with a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately so that they can receive support on the most appropriate way to manage the situation.

For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the Trust it is expected that they identify this to the Headteacher and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF DATA**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, colleagues or other matters relating to the Trust. This could include personal and sensitive data, for example information about a student's home life. Employees should never use this information to their own personal advantage, or to humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Employees should never disclose this information unless this is in the proper circumstances and with the proper authority.

If an employee is ever in doubt about what information can or can't be disclosed they should speak to the Business Manager.

The Trust holds and processes data that is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. Employees are expected to comply with the Trust's systems for collecting, storing and using data. If any employee becomes aware that data is at risk of compromise or loss, or has been compromised or lost they must report it immediately to the [Business Manager] / appropriate Headteacher.

Employees must ensure that they have read and understood all of the policies that relate to data including IT policies.

**10. PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students. Employees must ensure that they only do so in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student.

There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.

Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

**11. SOCIAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS**

Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc., to any student then they should report this to the Headteacher.

The Trust's advice to staff is not to connect to students via personal social media accounts or other personal communication channels unless this is for professional purposes and the employee can demonstrate that this is the case, and they have notified the Headteacher

Each Academy within the Trust is part of a wider community and it is recognised that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of the Academy at which they work. It is expected that staff use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

Employees should read and understand the Trust's Acceptable use of IT, Email, Internet and Social Media policy.

**12. WORKING ONE TO ONE WITH STUDENTS**

There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore it is important that employees:

- Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the Academy at which they work
- Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room
- If possible, inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand
- Report to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

**13. DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

Employees are role models to students and how they present themselves is important. The expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed in work at all times. Staff are expected to wear clothing and/or footwear that are appropriate for the workplace and/or an individual's job role. Clothing/footwear that risk safety, are revealing, allow underwear to be seen, have offensive logos or writing, or are ripped or torn are not permitted at any time. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing/footwear is inappropriate then they should not wear it to work. Employees can always speak to their line manager if they are unsure. Employees will be discreetly informed if their clothing or footwear is deemed to be unacceptable.

**14. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

For many employees there will be a limited opportunity to accept gifts and hospitality, but all staff must be aware that it is not acceptable for staff to accept bribes. Therefore any gift, promotional offer or hospitality, intended either for the employee or for the Academy that exceeds a nominal value of £15.00 must be declared to the [Business Manager] and permission must be obtained before accepting. If an employee is ever unsure, then the best course of action is to politely decline the offer.

It is traditional for students and their parents or carers to give gifts as a small token of appreciation or as a thank you to members of staff at certain times throughout the academic year. This Code of Conduct is not designed to stop that practice. Staff may accept gifts from students and their parents or carers provided that they meet this definition. Any member of staff receiving a gift with a value greater than £15.00 should inform the [Business Manager] who will decide whether the gift can be accepted. Staff should make the Designated Safeguarding Lead aware of any student who is giving them gifts on a regular basis, or any student or parent or carer who expects something in return for a gift, as this would not be acceptable.

Staff should not give gifts to students unless this is part of a recognised practice. Rewarding students should be part of the Trust's recognised practice with agreement from the relevant Senior Leadership Team.

**15. KEEPING WITHIN THE LAW**

Staff are expected to operate within the law. Unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work or outside work, may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. However, being

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investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

Employees must ensure that they:

- Uphold the law at work
- Never commit a crime away from work which could damage public confidence in them or the Trust, or which makes them unsuitable for the work they do. This includes, for example:
  - submitting false or fraudulent claims to public bodies (for example, income support, housing or other benefit claims)
  - breaching copyright on computer software or published documents
  - sexual offences which will render them unfit to work with children or vulnerable adults
  - crimes of dishonesty which render them unfit to hold a position of trust.
- Write and tell the Headteacher (Chair of the Trust Board if they are the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher) immediately if they are questioned by the police, charged with, or convicted of, any crime whilst they are employed at the Trust (this includes outside of their working hours). The Headteacher and/or Trustees will then need to consider whether this charge or conviction damages public confidence in the Trust or makes the employee unsuitable to carry out their duties.
- Driving offences should be reported if an employee transports students in any way. Employees must also ensure their car has up to date TAX and MOT. Driving convictions should be declared to [the HR department].

### **16. CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK AND AT WORK RELATED FUNCTIONS**

Unlike some other forms of employment, working at Equitas Academies Trust means that an employee's conduct outside of work could have an impact on their role.

Staff must not engage in conduct outside of work or via the internet and/or social media which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. Employees should be aware that any conduct that could impact on their role within the Academy at which they work or affect the Academy's reputation will be addressed under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. It is expected that employees make a member of the Senior Leadership Team aware immediately of any such situations.

Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on the Academy's reputation.

### **17. USE OF EQUIPMENT FOR NON-WORK PURPOSES**

The Trust will allow employees reasonable use of equipment and facilities, provided that authorisation has been obtained on every occasion, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the Trust, and that any costs are met by the individual.

### **18. PRIVATE TELEPHONE CALLS**

Employees may use telephone facilities to make occasional private calls for essential or emergency matters. Private international calls are not permitted without prior authorisation

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from the Headteacher. Employees who have been provided mobile phones must reimburse the Trust for the use of these phones for private calls and texts etc.

**19. USE OF I.T. EQUIPMENT, INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Users of the Trust’s I.T. and the internet facilities must behave reasonably towards other users and the facilities and in public areas they must behave appropriately. Users who do not behave reasonably and appropriately may be subject to disciplinary action. Employees may use Academy internet facilities for occasional personal matters, but must not access social media for personal purposes in working hours.

**20. REVIEW OF POLICY**

**This policy is reviewed and amended every 3 years by the Trust.**

**Date of next review July 2021**

**I agree to the terms of this code of conduct:**

**PRINT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_