

All Saints Schools Trust



Staff Code of Conduct

2022 - 26

Staff Code of Conduct

Rationale:

The public is entitled to have trust and confidence in the integrity of the All Saints Schools Trust and its schools and everyone who works in or for the Trust.

The conduct of everyone must therefore be of the highest standard. This Code of conduct has been prepared to help everyone: including employees, volunteers and governors, by providing a framework of guidelines related to conduct.

Aims:

This Code of Conduct is intended as a guide and a help to all school staff, contractors and volunteers. It sets out the standards of conduct which everyone is expected to follow when within or representing the Trust or its schools. The Code is not exhaustive but is written to assist and provide a framework. Advice and guidance should be sought as necessary. If in doubt, individuals should ask.

The underlying purpose of this Code is to ensure that the Trust and all of the schools within it provide a high quality, professional service to pupils and stakeholders in accordance with the law and the Trust and schools vision and values, policies and procedures. The Code is also intended to promote public confidence in the integrity of the Trust/schools.

Scope:

This Code of Conduct shall be applicable to all staff of the Trust/schools as well as all other adults working within the Trust/schools whatever their position, role or responsibilities. This will include all volunteers, including governors. It will also include anyone contracted by the Trust/schools, including work experience students, during their time in any of the schools.

General Obligations:

Before commencing working for the Trust, all staff are required to undergo an induction meeting with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust or Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher of the relevant school which will include a briefing on the contents of this Code. At that time, it will be made clear that adults working for the Trust or schools must all:

- act with utmost good faith with regard to the business of the Trust/schools,
- do all in their power to promote the Trust/schools' interests,
- not do anything which may adversely affect the Trust/schools' reputation.

Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring staff or the Trust/schools into disrepute will be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

In accordance with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy, management staff must ensure that they do not discriminate in recruitment and employment practices or in the delivery of services. They must also ensure that in their dealings with the local community/ies, that all members of the public are treated with respect and fairness at all times.

It is expected that all staff, volunteers and long term contractors will read this document carefully and be fully aware of its provisions and also be aware of the Safer Working Guidance 2015 which is available within the Trust/schools.

General Responsibilities:

All adults who work or volunteer in the school must always act, and be seen to act, in the best interests of all children. They should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. They 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.

They must also familiarise themselves and abide by all of the policies of the Trust and School and take care to ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or their duty to carry out those policies.

All adults who work in the school must be aware of the health and safety of everyone, and particularly familiarise themselves with the fire precautions, procedures and drill routines. They must regard practicing of fire drills or building evacuations in a positive manner, and ensure that they are perceived by pupils as an essential pre- caution to prevent risk of injury or fatality.

Staff must attend punctually in accordance with their conditions of service and at times agreed with their line manager. Those unable to avoid being late or absent should, whenever possible, give as much notice to the Head Teacher/CEO as possible so that alternative cover arrangements may be made.

It is understood that as an employer, the Trust must endeavour to:

- promote a culture of openness and support
- ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
- ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
- ensure that all adults are aware of expectations, policies and procedures.

Safeguarding:

Our expectations are for staff members, volunteers and contractors to:

- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to any suspicion about their actions or intent.
- Respect their duty to protect children and young people from harm and to maintain professional boundaries.
- Read and understand Trust and School policies on Child Protection and Safeguarding including their obligations to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

In order to ensure safeguards both for those working in the school and pupils, anyone working in the school must obtain permission from the Head Teacher before taking pupils off the School premises or before arranging any visiting speakers or granting anyone access to the School. Staff must also obtain permission before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the school from the Headteacher/ Head of School.

Confidentiality, Information Disclosure and Data Protection:

Adults working within the Trust must conform to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the loss, destruction, inaccuracy or disclosure of personal information does not occur as a result of their actions. This includes information relating to staff, volunteer and pupil data.

In addition,

- Y Members of staff and adults must not disclose personal or financial information about any other member of the Trust or school communities to any unauthorised person, external organisation or agency without the express consent of the individual concerned or that of the CEO/Head Teacher.
- Y Members of staff and adults must not use information obtained in the course of their duties to the detriment of the Trust/School or for personal gain or benefit; nor must they impart this information to others who might use it in such away.
- Y Confidential information belonging to the Trust/schools must only be used where necessary to assist in the carrying out of work within the Trust/School. It must not be disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it. If in doubt, staff and adults should seek advice from the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Y Members of staff and adults need to ensure that where personal information is recorded using modern technologies that systems and devices are kept secure.

Financial Accountability:

Making Professional Judgements:

Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

Where no specific guidance exists, individuals should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their line manager or, where appropriate, the relevant 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 CEO, Head Teacher 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

Power and Positions of Trust and Authority:

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with children in a school setting are in a position of trust in relation to all pupils on the roll. The relationship between a person working with a child or children is one in which the adult has a position of power or influence. It is vital for adults to understand this power, that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable pupils means that adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

It is imperative that those working in the Trust/schools do not:

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

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Propriety and Behaviour:

All adults working with children are in a position of trust in relation to the individuals in their care. These individuals must therefore adopt high standards of personal integrity and conduct and behave in such a way that does not compromise their position both within, or outside the Trust/School or the safety and welfare of the children. Staff, volunteers and contractors should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident. Further guidance on this point is contained in Appendix A.

The Teaching Standards issued by the Department for Education also set out the minimum professional standards for the teaching profession and state that a teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

All adults in the Trust/schools should be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they share a household, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children. They should also understand that a person who provides Early Years education or Childcare may be disqualified because of their 'association' with a person living or employed in the same household who is disqualified.

All adults within the Trust/schools have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. 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.

This means that these adults 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 pupil
- use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils
- discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- make (or encourage other to make) unprofessional personal comments which demean or humiliate or might be interpreted as such

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. These individuals 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.

Public Duty and Private Interest:

Off-duty hours are a staff member's own personal concern. It is important, however, that people do not put themselves in a position where their duty to the Trust/School and their private interests conflict.

All those who work within the Trust/schools must abide by the policies of the Trust and schools. These can be found on the Trust/schools websites.

Physical Contact:

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for adults within the schools 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 pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

This means that everyone working in the Trust/School should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or any person to whom this action is described
- never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent
- treat pupils with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- 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 pupils, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed pupil is age appropriate
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil
- establish the preferences of pupils and consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact
- always explain to the pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others
- 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
- be aware of the guidance provided in the Trust/their school's Intimate Care and Touch policies.

One to One Situations:

Those people working in one to one situations with pupils at one of the schools, including designated visitors from external organisations, can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints.

This means that they should:

- ensure that wherever possible there is visual access and/or an open door
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible (such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy)
- always report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry
- consider the needs and circumstances of the pupil involved

Infatuations and 'Crushes':

All adults within the schools need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any individual within a school who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Head Teacher or, in their absence, another senior manager. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

Educational Visits:

Adults should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an educational visit where a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. It should always be remembered that these adults continue to be in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted in any way as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

First Aid and the Administration of Medication:

First aid must only be administered by trained first aiders. No medication must be administered unless an appropriate form has first been filled in by the parent / carer which gives permission for this to happen.

Transporting Pupils:

In certain situations staff or volunteers may be required or offer to transport pupils as part of their work. This should not however be done unless the need for this has first been agreed by a manager. Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles and with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Where transport is to be offered to a pupil, 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 pupil
- ensure that all passengers wear seatbelt and adhere to current legislation regarding the use of car seats for younger children
- have an appropriate license/permit for the vehicle and ensure that the maximum carrying capacity is not exceeded.
- 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 pupil this is for the minimum time
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupil 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
- ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified
- refer to Local and National guidance for educational visits

Staff should never offer to transport pupils outside of their normal working duties (e.g. during working school hours), other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean the child may be at risk. In these circumstances, the matter should

be recorded and reported to the Head Teacher and the child's parent(s).

Photography, Videos and Other Images:

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.

When adults within a Trust school use their personal equipment to take an image of pupils at or on behalf of the Trust or school, and encryption of this equipment is not a reasonable option, it is important to consider the measures these individuals can take to ensure that the risk regarding data security is reduced to a tolerable level. For example, transferring images from the camera to a secure location and securely deleting them from the memory card as soon as is practical.

It may also be possible to consider using an alternative device such as a smart-phone or tablet which does offer an encrypted file system and encryption of their memory cards. However, care should be taken that the device does not automatically upload images to a remote cloud service or social network and that the method used to transfer the images from the device does not present a further security risk (eg transfer as an email attachment).

Further, individuals within any of the Trust schools should:

- only publish images of pupils where their parent/carer has given explicit written consent to do so.
- only take images where the pupil 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 pupils in their possession
- avoid making images in one to one situations

This means that staff/adults should not:

- take images of pupils for their personal use
- display or distribute images of pupils unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so
- take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress
- take images of children which could be considered indecent or sexual

Whilst images are regularly used for very positive purposes adults need to be aware of the potential for these to be taken and/or misused or manipulated for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Particular regard needs to be given when images are taken of young or vulnerable children who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Internet Use:

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. E-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Adults within the school 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.

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, web-sites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand held devices. (Given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Adults within any Trust school should not request or respond to any personal information from or about children other than may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

No personal contact details should be given to any pupils for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, volunteer or contractor, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

Adults within any of the Trust schools should only use equipment and Internet services provided by the Trust/School while at school. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the computer is illegal. Under no circumstances must adults in school access inappropriate images on the Internet or access any other site which could call into question the individual's suitability to work with children. The same rule applies to the use of the Trust/school's equipment at home e.g. use of lap-tops.

Staff must observe copyright laws on computer software, audio-visual and printed material.

Social Contact Outside the Workplace:

It is acknowledged that adults who work within the Trust/schools may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of their professional relationship. Everyone 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.

It should be recognised that some types of social contact with pupils or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the Trust/school into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the individual should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the individual's own family.

Some adults within the school may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the individual 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.

If a parent requests to use an individual's services outside of the School (e.g. babysitting or tutoring), the Head Teacher should be informed.

Media:

Other than on matters of publicity, only the CEO, Chair of the Trust Board, Head Teacher or Chair of Governors is authorised to speak or send any communication on behalf of the Trust/School to members of the press or broadcast media. This is to avoid any embarrassment or unfair pressure on staff. This authorisation may be extended by the above individuals to other staff members.

Staff Dress Code:

To dress professionally shows pride, effort, respect for oneself and one's profession. Adults in school are role models for learners in the school; therefore they have a responsibility to model appropriate dress and appearance. They should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life.

This means that clothing should be worn which:

- promotes a positive and professional image

- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is not considered to be discriminatory
- is compliant with professional standards

Adults must be neat, clean, smart and tidy, wearing clothes, including shoes, which are commensurate with their post in the school. The dress code is smart rather than casual. This is not a policy meant to detail every eventuality, it is up to individuals to decide whether their appearance is appropriate, guided by the principles above. However, denim, flip flops and revealing clothes, such as short skirts or low cut tops, must be avoided. For health and safety reasons jewellery should be kept to a minimum and be appropriate to the role. Correct equipment and dress must be worn when completing activities such as PE, Design and Technology.

All adults within any Trust school must wear ID badges.

Our Trust and schools are committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual dress choices which relate to specific customs, culture, religion or traditions.

Financial Inducements, Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship:

Adults within the Trust/schools need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Similarly it is inadvisable to give personal gifts to pupils 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 pupil should be in accordance with agreed practice, 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. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair and agreed criteria agreed by more than one member of staff.

Individuals must not seek or receive preferential rates by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the Trust/school. Offers of hospitality, including visits to exhibitions, business meals, social functions, etc should only be accepted if there is a genuine need to represent The Trust/School in an official capacity and with the approval of the CEO or Head Teacher.

Although adults within the Trust/School should not give or receive gifts from pupils or parents on a regular basis or of any significant value, it is acceptable however for individuals to receive small tokens of appreciation, such as at Christmas time. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor or is sought to sponsor a Trust/School activity, the above rule applies. Particular care must be taken when

dealing with contractors or potential contractors and in all cases the approval of the CEO/Head Teacher must be sought.

Use of the School Facilities:

The Trust's/School's property and facilities may only be used for school business unless permission for their private use has been granted by the CEO/Head Teacher.

Publication of Books / Articles:

If individuals who work within the Trust/School wish to publish books, letters, dissertations etc that have been written in connection with their duties and in which they describe themselves as holding a role within the Trust/School, they must firstly consult with the CEO and relevant Head Teacher.

Medication:

Adults taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children should seek medical advice regarding their continuing suitability to do so.

Managers should ensure that, if they are informed that an individual is taking medication, the individual in question only works directly with children if there is clear confirmation from a qualified professional that the medication is unlikely to impair the individual's ability to look after children.

Risk assessment is likely to recommend that staff medication on the premises must be securely stored and out of reach of children at all times.

Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs:

The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable. All individuals who work for the Trust or in one of its schools are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an individual's working life, the Trust/School has the right to discuss the matter with the individual and to take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the Trust or School's reputation and public confidence.

Other Employment:

The Trust/schools do not seek to preclude employees unreasonably from undertaking additional employment but employees are required to devote their full time, attention and abilities to their duties during working hours and to act in the best interests of the Trust/School at all times. Staff members' work commitments to another employer must also never interfere with their work for the School; they must be able to work for the Trust/School at the contracted/arranged times rested and refreshed.

Accordingly, whether employed on a full-time or part-time contract, they must not, without the written consent of the CEO, in the case of the Trust, or Head Teacher and Governors in the case of an individual school, undertake any employment or engagement which might interfere with the performance of their duties, conflict with the interests of the Trust/School or bring the Trust/School into disrepute. They are also not allowed to set up a business or accept employment with a business engaged in work which is in direct competition with the Trust/School.

If staff have another job with another organisation they must not act as a messenger, go between or arbitrator between that organisation and the School. Formal channels of communication must be maintained at all times.

Disciplinary Action:

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be the subject of disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

Serious misconduct and/or criminal offences committed during or outside of working hours which bring employees or the Trust/School into disrepute will also be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

Further Information:

This Code of Conduct cannot cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert staff to some of the matters about which queries are received. It does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

If staff are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or require further information or guidance on the appropriate course of action to take in any situation they must contact the CEO or relevant Head Teacher for advice before they take any action.

Period of Review:

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Appendix A - Professional Behaviour

Professional behaviour is a generic term but within this Code of Conduct it includes such aspects as:

- Y acting in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- Y ensuring effective communication throughout the Trust/School by being familiar with communication channels and Trust/School procedures
- Y co-operating and liaising with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure pupils receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;
- Y endeavouring to assist the Trust/School to achieve its corporate and strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude to marketing and the achievement of quality and equality;
- Y showing respect for Trust/School property;
- Y maintaining the image of the Trust/School through standards of dress, general courtesy, correct use of Trust/School stationery, etc.;
- Y taking responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in the classroom and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- Y being fit for work (ie not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- Y being familiar with job requirements (eg proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, etc), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- Y ensuring all assessments/exams/tests are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- Y promote the values of the Trust/school, and safeguard all children against harm, including radicalisation;
- Y respecting the rights and opinions of others.