



# Interaction & Communication

— Academy Trust —

# Staff code of Conduct

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## Introduction

The Interaction and Communication Academy Trust (ICAT) is required to set out a Code of Conduct for all Academy employees.

Academy staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence. The Trust always expects all staff to demonstrate positive behaviours that set a good example to pupils. As a member of a school community, the Trust believes that every staff member, whatever their role, has an individual responsibility to act professionally whether inside or outside working hours.

This Staff Code of Conduct policy applies to all staff employed by the Trust in whatever capacity.

In addition to this Policy, all staff employed under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the DfE Teachers' Standards 2011 (updated June 2013) Part 2 – Personal and Professional Conduct.

Employees must be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

**If required, each school within the Trust will also have their own "Expectations of staff" protocol and all staff working at the school must work within the guidelines of their protocol.**

## Legal Framework

The Staff Code of Conduct has due regard to **all** the current associated statutory legislation, the statutory and non-statutory departmental guidance. This policy also operates in conjunction with the ICAT and individual schools' policies.

## Definitions

References made to 'child' and 'children' refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years. However, the principles of the document apply to professional behaviours towards all pupils, including those over the age of 18 years. 'Child' must therefore be read to mean any pupil at the education establishment.

References made to adults and staff refer to all those who work with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity (e.g. volunteers).

The term 'allegation' means where it is alleged that a person who works with children has

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;

- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

References are made in this document to legislation and statutory guidance which differ dependent on the setting and alter over time. Wherever possible, such references have been removed in order that the document does not appear to quickly become out of date or to apply only to certain staff or settings. However, the behavioural principles contained within the document remain consistent. Hence, wherever possible, such references have been removed in order that the document does not appear to quickly become out of date or to apply only to certain staff or settings.

### **Purpose, Scope and Principles**

A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all Academy staff are expected to observe. The Academy must notify staff of this code and the expectations therein. Academy staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the Academy. As a member of an Academy community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Academy, whether inside or outside working hours.

All staff are expected to comply with the law. Particularly in areas that apply to their work in the Trust or a Trust Academy, particularly in matters such as health and safety, safeguarding of children, and data protection. Staff are also expected to carry out their duties in accordance with the relevant policies, procedures, rules and guidance adopted by the Trust Board.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the Trust, including the CEO;
- all staff that are attached any of the Academy
- all those who work with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity (e.g. volunteers)

Any staff employed by an external body are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

### **Underpinning Principles**

- The welfare of children is paramount
- Staff must understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff must work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff must acknowledge that deliberately invested/malicious accusations are extremely rare and that all concerns must be reported and recorded
- Staff must discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff must apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- Staff must be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or other Professional bodies.
- Staff and managers must continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- It is important that members of staff do not put themselves in a position where their duty to the Multi Academy Trust and their private interests' conflict.

### **Setting an Example**

- All staff who work in ICAT Academies set examples of behaviour and conduct which may be copied by pupils/students. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- All staff must demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same.
- All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

### **Safeguarding Pupils/Students**

- Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from:
  - physical abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - neglect
- The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the relevant Academies Designated Senior Lead (DSL) for Child Protection
- The Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure are available for

- all staff, who must familiarise themselves with these documents and they must be familiar with these documents
- Staff must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues
  - Staff must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare

In conjunction with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and each school's Safeguarding policy, staff should inform the school/Trust at the earliest opportunity if:

- They are accused of behaving in such a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm to children (as outlined in the latest DfE statutory guidance **"Keeping Children Safe in Education"**)
- is the subject of a police investigation

### **Pupil/Student Development**

- Staff must comply with the Trust/Academy policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils/students.
- Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils/students.
- Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils/students.

### **Personal Interest**

Staff should not abuse their position in the Trust or a Trust Academy to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or obtain an advantage for themselves, whether financial or otherwise.

They should not allow personal interests to interfere with their work in the Trust or a Trust Academy.

Staff should not use their position in the Trust/Academy to advocate any one religion, culture or political ideology to pupils. It is the direct responsibility of all staff to uphold British Values as defined in law from time to time and the Trust's own values.

To avoid any doubt or unwarranted suspicion employees should tell the Trust/Academy about any personal interest which might compromise or be seen as compromising their position in the Trust/Academy. If in any doubt about what should be declared they should seek advice from the Trust.

Examples of personal interests include:

- situations in which the employee's job (for example, as head teacher or Academy business manager) could unduly influence decisions on contracts into which the Trust/Academy has entered or is proposing to enter, or where an employee has a personal or financial interest in any of the contracts, either directly or indirectly (for example, through a partner or relative).
- where an employee holds a position with an external company or organisation, whether paid or unpaid, which may lead to a conflict of interest. (Examples include directorships of companies, serving on bodies such as charities, voluntary groups, governing bodies of other educational establishments.)
- if an employee has a close personal relationship with a person who has influence over the employee's employment with the Trust/Academy or whose employment the employee could influence or control.

### Honesty and Integrity

- Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Academy property and facilities.
- All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act (see policy on the server), you must refer to the Trust Whistleblowing procedure.
- Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Academy/Trust must be declared to the Principal/CEO, except for "one off" token gifts from students or parents.

### Conduct outside of work

- Staff must **not** engage in conduct outside work 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.
- Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable.

### Social Media

- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others
- All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other

legislation. They must also operate in line with the academy's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use policies.

- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Academy, The Trust community or employer into disrepute.

### **Other Employment**

- Staff may undertake work outside of the Trust, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust
- Staff must ensure that their employment with the Trust and their other employment does not reach a level which contravenes the working time regulations
- Staff should ensure that any additional employment does not conflict with their capacity to fulfil their contract of employment with the Trust.
- Staff undertaking other employment must not use Trust/Academy time or equipment for that purpose without the permission of the Trust/Academy
- Staff in any doubt should ask the Trust for advice.

### **Publications**

- Staff should not publish any material which brings the Trust or a Trust Academy into disrepute.
- Staff may make disclosures of public interest to other appropriate organisations or the press (whistleblowing) provided that such disclosures meet the legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act and should take advice from their union or Public Concern at Work before doing so.
- If staff wish to publish a professional article unconnected with the Trust/Academy, then the article should not link them directly to the Trust/Academy.

### **Alcohol, illegal substances and medication**

The Trust/Academy accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available and acknowledges that some illegal substances are also readily obtainable. Staff are not expected to use illegal substances. Staff must ensure that the use of alcohol out of working time does not adversely affect their work performance. The Trust will not accept staff arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs and whose ability is impaired in any way by reason of the consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs.

The Trust recognises that alcoholism and other addictions are illnesses and that employees should be offered appropriate support through managing attendance procedures. The Trust/Academy will also consider the effects of legally prescribed drugs or certain types of medication on the performance of staff and deal with these under managing attendance procedures. This may involve undertaking a risk

assessment where necessary and taking occupational health or other specialist advice as appropriate.

Staff who are prescribed a type of medication which they have not taken before should make themselves aware of possible side-effects. In accordance with their duty to take reasonable care of their own and their colleagues' health and safety they should advise the Trust/Academy if the medication starts to affect their ability to do their job or travel safely to work, or if there is a likelihood that this will happen. The Trust/Academy should undertake risk assessments and take occupational health or other specialist advice as appropriate.

## **Criminal Charges and Convictions**

An employee must notify the Trust/Principal if charged with, or convicted of, any criminal offence, or in receipt of a formal police caution and should do so as soon as possible after the charge, caution or conviction. If a Principal is subject of a charge, they must inform the Trust CEO. If it is the CEO who is subject of a charge, they must inform the Chair of the Board of Directors. Depending on the circumstances, failure to inform may result in disciplinary action.

The Trust acknowledges that a caution is not a criminal conviction, but staff must be aware that cautions have to be declared during Disclosure and Barring checks unless they meet the filtering rules of the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Trust acknowledges that an employee charged with an offence is innocent until proved guilty.

However, special considerations will apply if the offence is one of those which is on the list of offences relevant to safeguarding (a full list is available on the Disclosure and Barring Service's website) or if an employee is imprisoned on remand pending trial.

Information given to the Trust will be treated with strict confidence and stored securely in the same way as other confidential personal information, having regard to the guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service on the length of time for which particular kinds of information should be stored.

## **Health and Safety**

Staff have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and to cooperate with the Trust under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. These responsibilities are identified in each Academy's Health and Safety Policy.

Staff are always required to act in such a way as to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others. Any action which potentially puts at risk the health and/or safety of themselves or others will be viewed seriously and may be investigated under the Trust's disciplinary procedure. Staff may also face criminal prosecution for serious breaches of health and safety legislation.



## **Dress Code**

The Trust expects that dress will be appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the job and to any health and safety considerations. The Trust values and welcomes the ethnic diversity of its workforce and dress codes will take account of ethnic and religious dress preferences with sensitivity ensuring that employees are free to observe them, subject to the needs of pupils' education.

The Trust expects that:

- Staff's appearance will be clean and neat when at work or representing the Trust/Academy
- Remember that they are role models for the Trust/Academy and that their dress and appearance should reflect this
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders
- Attempt to cover any tattoos or body art whilst at work, if unable to do so then check with their line manager that their tattoos are acceptable i.e. non-offensive, non-explicit etc.

## **Identity Badges**

There is a general expectation that staff issued with identity cards/badges will carry them at all times in the Trust office/Academy and when they represent the Trust/Academy. The Trust/Academy may also expect staff to wear identity badges in order to assist pupils and visitors at certain times.

## **Confidentiality**

Staff are required to comply with the law on data protection, GDPR and freedom of information and observe the Trust policies and procedures for dealing with personal information about other employees, pupils, families or members of the public. Staff must ensure they do not pass on any confidential, personal information received or obtained through their employment to anyone, whether inside or outside the Trust/Academy, or to any organisation not entitled to that information, and must not use such information for personal advantage. Staff should seek guidance from the Data Protection Officer (Nicola Roys) if they are uncertain as to whether information can be passed on to another person or organisation. The Trust, as data controller in law, is responsible for ensuring that the necessary guidance on Trust procedures for complying with GDPR law is made available to staff, including the arrangements for storing confidential information, whether held on paper or electronically.

## **Disciplinary Action**

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and

conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.