



Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust Policy

# Code of Conduct Employees and Volunteers

2023

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<b>Officer Responsible</b>	HR Director of the Trust

**The Trust, all Academies within the Trust and Shireland Learning Limited must comply with this policy.**

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## Rationale

This policy aims to set and maintain the standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teacher's Standards.

All staff employed by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust are role models for our students and will consistently demonstrate high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teacher's Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors, and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust/school and its pupils.

## Aims

- To enable all staff to know and understand what is deemed acceptable.
- To help staff to work with students, families/carers and other staff to create an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.
- To ensure that all students and staff have the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- To ensure that every student and member of staff is helped to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change, and that is receptive and respectful towards other identities.

Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust adheres to the following principles.

## All staff:

- a) Put the wellbeing, development and progress of students first.
- b) Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their practice.
- c) Help all students to become confident and successful learners.
- d) Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality.
- e) Strive to establish productive partnerships with families/carers and the wider community
- f) Work as a whole Trust team
- g) Cooperate with other professional colleagues
- h) Demonstrate honesty, integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the Trust.

## Legislation and Guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## General Obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school.
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect.
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within.
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards.

## Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the Staff Portal and from the school office. New staff will be directed to this as part of their induction.

All staff are required to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and are required to sign to confirm this.

## Allegations that meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

### Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in one-to-one activities where they can’t easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our Allegations and Concerns Raised in Relation to Staff policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our Allegations and Concerns Raised in Relation to Staff policy. This is available in the HR section of the Trust Staff Portal.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the Principal. If the concern is about the , or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the CEO or chair of the board of trustees.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our Trust's detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

## Relationships with Pupils and Students

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access.
- Others can see into the room.
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

**All** staff have a responsibility to develop the emotional wellbeing of students as well as nurturing their academic potential – in particular this relates to:

- Treating all students with respect at all times. The use, by staff, of derogatory, demeaning or abusive statements or subjecting a student to ridicule or put downs is not acceptable within the Trust.
- Staff are expected to set an example to students and therefore the use of appropriate language is important at all times. This does not include swearing or the use of vulgarities at any time.

- Staff are expected to work with all students irrespective of their demeanour or ability. It is important that every opportunity is treated as a new beginning and staff should always try to emphasise the positive.
- Staff should be addressed by students by their surnames (Sir or Miss) throughout the Academy. This applies to all staff working at the Academy regardless of job role.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our Allegations and Concerns Raised Against Staff policy.

## Disqualification Under the Childcare Act

Schools are prohibited from employing a disqualified person in connection with relevant childcare provision. All staff providing early years care or later years child care or engaged in childcare in a primary or secondary setting are covered by the Act.

- inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List;
- being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults.
- Certain orders made in relation to the care of children.
  - a. refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare,<sup>4</sup> or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering.
  - b. being found to have committed an offence overseas, which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 Regulations if it had been done in any part of the United Kingdom.

If your post includes working with /volunteering/having management responsibility for provision for children aged 8 years and under you have a duty to provide information to the Trust in compliance with the legislation.

## Dress

A professional, smart and non-extreme code of dress is expected from all staff. All students are expected to dress to a high standard at all times and the same is expected of staff. Work wear for staff should be that which would be acceptable within a professional office environment.

Jeans and t-shirts are not acceptable as work wear.

Footwear should be appropriate to a busy environment – trainers are not acceptable for every day wear apart from those delivering Physical Education or Dance.

Where uniform or protective clothing is provided this must be worn.

Body piercing is discouraged, apart from small earrings, and staff are expected to conform to this convention while at any premises belonging to the Trust or on Trust business. Visible tattoos are discouraged and should where ever possible be covered.

Chewing gum is not allowed within the Academy.

## Equipment

### IT Equipment

Staff are responsible for the use of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust IT equipment while in their possession and should therefore be vigilant about who has access to their password and personal machine. Students are not allowed to use staff log on details or IT equipment if a member of staff is logged on. In the event that IT equipment (or any other equipment) is stolen, it must be reported immediately to the Principal.

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet used on the school IT systems.

### Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones by staff is allowed only in the following designated staff areas: the staff room, staff workroom & offices. Staff should not use their mobile phones during lessons and should not make or receive calls at any time that they are supervising students, unless in an emergency situation as sanctioned by the principal.

### Other Equipment

Any items belonging to the Trust must remain available to be used by staff and students as necessary. Staff will be responsible for the safe keeping of equipment loaned to them by the Trust.

Staff must not use Trust premises or facilities for activities not connected with their employment without the prior agreement of the CEO. This includes the personal use of email, telephones and IT equipment. Staff are discouraged from keeping personal data on work devices and should be aware that data held on work devices may be viewed by the Trust.



## Time Keeping and Attendance

With respect to attendance please see the Management of Sickness Absence Policy.

Punctuality is the key to running a successful educational establishment and students and staff are expected to attend all lessons, arrive for work on time. Staff should be ready to receive students at the scheduled start time for sessions as well as making sure students are not dismissed before the appropriate end of session time.

All duties must be attended on time.

## Honesty and Integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £20 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## Conflict of Interest

Staff should declare any personal interest that could bring about conflict with the Trust or its academies interests. Staff must declare to the Finance & Compliance Director any financial interests or non-financial interests which could or could be perceived to conflict with their role within the Trust.

Staff are required not to take outside employment which conflicts with Trust interests. Any staff intending to work for outside organisations should seek permission from the CEO. In the case of the CEO, permission should be sought from the Chair of the Trust.

## Conduct Outside Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of Trust or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the Trust community.

Staff should be careful to ensure that nothing they say or do brings Trusts name into disrepute. Gossip in our communities can damage a reputation that has taken a considerable amount of time to establish.

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the school, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

## Domestic Abuse

Staff who perpetrate domestic violence and abuse should be aware that such behaviour goes against this policy. Some forms of domestic violence and abuse are a crime.

Staff charged or convicted in court because of domestic violence and abuse should declare this formally to the Human Resources Director, where the Trust believes the charges/ conviction to have implications in terms of the employee's work role.

## Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the school, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Staff must ensure that any personal data they process is in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations. They should not disclose confidential information to anyone who does not have the right to receive it and take every step to ensure data is kept safe and secure. Equally staff should not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. Staff should be committed to data privacy and ensure they are fully up to date with the Trust Data Protection Policy and

Privacy Notice which outlines what types of data is collected and how it is processed. If there is doubt about whether or not to share information, advice must be sought from an appropriate senior member of staff i.e., the Human Resources Director, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Principal or Data Protection Officer.

Information obtained during the course of an individual's work should never be used for personal gain or benefit, nor should it be passed onto others who might use it in such a way.

All press contact is to be undertaken Chief Executive Officer or Principal only.

## Smoking/Alcohol /Drugs

Alcohol may not be consumed during the working hours.

No facilities will be provided for smokers either inside or outside the premises. Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust does not condone employees taking time off work to smoke.

Staff are not permitted to smoke on Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust premises or grounds or take drugs (or be in possession of illegal substances).

Staff must be conscious of the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust's Safeguarding/SRE/drug policy when discussing such issues, particularly the use of illegal substances, with students.

It is expected that staff will attend for work in a fit state to carry out their duties – staff found under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be deemed to be unfit and disciplinary action may follow.

## Use of Cars

Staff registration numbers are held on a database and it is important that staff inform administration if their number changes. For their own protection, staff should **never** give lifts to students without clearing it with a member of the Trust Strategy Team.

All staff who are attending courses or meetings on behalf of the Academy Trust or as part of their professional development must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance in place.

## Relationships with Other Staff

All staff are entitled to feel safe and secure at work and be free from intimidation or bullying behaviour. Staff are therefore expected to show professional courtesy and respect at all times to others working within Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust.

Should a member of staff feel that the above guideline has not been followed they should raise the matter with their line manager or in the case where this involves the line manager, with the Human Resources Director.

## Family/Carer Contacts

Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust has an expectation that staff will act swiftly and professionally at all times. This is particularly important where families/carers have contacted the Academy with a concern or complaint relating to the education of their child. The aim at the Academy Trust is to make a return call on the same day as the original contact was made, even if in the first instance this is just a holding call. At the very least, the call must be within 2 Academy days.

Where an error has been made we should look to apologise and correct the mistake as soon as possible. Investigations should be carried out promptly and effectively with families/carers informed of the outcome as soon as is practical. Where an ongoing investigation may take some time, due to a student or member of staff being absent for example, families/carers should be informed and given a date by which the investigation will be completed.

## Phone Calls to Students Home

Staff must check the data base prior to contacting a student's home. If a 'concern' has been flagged up on the system, the Principal/Vice Principal must sanction the call.

## Social Networking and the Internet

Staff personal mobile numbers are not to be shared with students. If contact has to be made, it must be made using a Trust mobile. If on a trip or visit, the Trust mobile number may likewise be given, and a Trust phone will be issued for this purpose.

Social networking sites such as Facebook **are not prohibited** on site (other than authorised Trust accounts). Staff must not add current pupils to their personal social networking sites and the Academy Trust strongly recommends that staff do not add former pupils. Social networking sites **must not** be used as a form of communication with families/carers regarding their child or any aspects of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust work.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by the Academy Trust, students, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Staff must ensure that their on-line profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by the Trust and should not post material which damages the reputation of the Trust or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.

Those who post material which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct which may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the Academy Trust, such comments are inappropriate.

Accessing inappropriate material is prohibited.

The internet should be used only for Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust and/or educational purposes and not for social gratification.

## Security

All staff must wear their Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust or Academy identification at all times. Any unidentified person should be asked for their identification and a member of the Senior Leadership Team alerted if none is given.

As much as we encourage staff to give all visitors a warm welcome staff should not admit visitors to the site other than through main reception where they will be logged and provided with a visitor badge.

## Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the Trust Board.

## Links with other Policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct.
- Allegations and Concerns Raised Against Staff Policy
- Staff Grievance procedures.
- Safeguarding.
- Gifts and hospitality.
- Online safety.
- Whistleblowing.