



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL  
& NOTTINGHAM

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

# ACADEMY

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following SNMAT policies as well as any relevant local academy policies:

Child Protection to Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Confidential reporting and whistleblowing

Social Media

Gifts Policy

<b>Policy:</b>	SNMAT Code of Conduct for School Staff
<b>Approved by:</b>	SNMAT Board of Directors
<b>Date:</b>	March 2022
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Three yearly

VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2	24.03.20	SD	Section 14 added – online teaching sessions
3	18.1.21	SD	Section 14 amended
4	9.3.22	JS	Section 12 added - personal relationships

## **Introduction**

In accordance with the DFE 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance April 2018 this code has been adopted by this academy in order for all academy staff to be fully aware of the standards of personal and professional conduct in relation to various aspects of their work. The code gives a clear framework for staff to know their responsibilities and will be discussed during the course of their employment, for example in team meetings as queries arise - to ensure the code is mutually monitored, positively promoted in the academy and understood by everyone.

Every member of academy staff will be asked to read this code of conduct and date and sign that they have read and understood the document as part of their induction. This code will be reviewed annually and updated by the Directors as and when necessary, and staff will be informed of any amendments. If staff have any questions about the requirements of this code, then advice should be sought from their line manager or the principal/headteacher. There is an expectation that all employees in this Trust will conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with the highest standard in order to maintain public trust and confidence and be beyond reproach in the performance of their duties. Each member of academy staff has a duty to ensure that the appropriate standards of conduct are upheld both by themselves and by colleagues.

## **Underlying principles**

All academy staff must act within the law whilst undertaking their official duties. Staff must not undermine fundamental values, including democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. Where staff are members of professional bodies, they must also comply with any standards of conduct which are set by that body. The conduct of all teachers must always be in line with the Teacher's Standards and where appropriate the Headteacher standards. Staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the academy, and maintain high standards in their own conduct, performance, attendance and punctuality. Staff must ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law or the policies and procedures of the academy and always show respect for the rights of others.

Staff are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service. Where staff are aware of any contraventions of this Code, illegality, misconduct or breach of procedure they should notify their principal/head teacher at the earliest opportunity. The Code does not seek to address every possible circumstance, and simply because a particular action may not be addressed within the Code, this does not condone that action by omission.

## **1. Safeguarding**

Staff must safeguard children's well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions, the local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and their academy's child protection policy. Staff must report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead person in academy and ensure the principal/headteacher is also informed. All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed.

All staff must be fully aware of the academy policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and, given their position of trust, must ensure that they do not put themselves in any situation where their conduct or behaviour with any pupil could be misconstrued. Any allegations of inappropriate contact with pupils will be investigated according to the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

If a child reports any safeguarding concerns to any member of staff, this must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead and/or the principal/headteacher. Staff must not promise confidentiality to a child and always ensure that any actions they take are in the interests of a child. Where staff have any safeguarding concerns about another member of staff these concerns must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead and/or the principal/headteacher. Serious case reviews from past cases in the media have highlighted the concerns about academy staff not sharing their knowledge with the leadership of the academy.

All staff must be aware that it is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended) for anyone to engage in a sexual relationship or grooming for such a relationship with a child aged under 18 with whom they are in a position of trust. It is vital that staff work within appropriate professional boundaries at all times with children and young people with whom they are in a position of trust. If staff, are unsure about what action to take or how they should respond to any situation they must immediately contact the designated safeguarding lead/headteacher. Any concerns about an inappropriate relationship between a member of staff and a pupil (irrespective of their age) will be fully investigated under the Disciplinary Procedure for Trust staff as a potential issue of gross misconduct.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

FGM mandatory reporting duty FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those

failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>. Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s designated safeguarding lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. Appendix A is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty.

## **2. Equality issues**

Staff must ensure that the equality and diversity policy, in relation to employment and their duties and responsibilities, are adhered to. All policies are held on the premises. This academy believes in equality and will not tolerate any harassment, intimidation, unfair discrimination or victimisation by academy staff against pupils, colleagues, parents, governors, trade union reps and other visitors. Staff should not by their manner or speech be discriminatory with regards to a person’s age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

## **3. Health and safety**

It is the responsibility of all staff, governors and visitors to the academy to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others and to assist in the creation of a safe work environment.

Staff have a responsibility to inform the principal/headteacher of any medical condition/illness they have during the course of their employment which may impact on their fitness to undertake their duties or on the health and safety of themselves, pupils, other staff, governors and visitors to the academy.

## **4. Relationships and contact between academy staff - the public, parents and Pupils**

Academy staff should always act in a courteous, efficient and impartial manner towards all individual pupils, groups of pupils, staff and individuals. Staff must always treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, observing proper boundaries appropriate to their position.

It is the policy of the academy that there will be no personal contact other than in certain exempted circumstances between staff and current/former pupils of academy

age outside the normal academy work environment. Any proposed work-related contact, outside of the normal working environment, must be agreed in advance by the principal/head teacher and be recorded and monitored. Unexpected contact with pupils should be kept to a minimum. e.g. brief greeting. Any transport of pupils must be agreed in line with the academy policy and always agreed with the head teacher.

Correspondence received by a member of staff from former pupils, the public or parents, including that from social media sources, should always be discussed with their line manager/ or principal/headteacher and filed with any response in the appropriate academy records system.

Staff should be extremely cautious when using social networking sites outside of work and avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any material, including comments or image, that could damage their professional reputation and/or bring the academy into disrepute. Where staff do use social networking sites profiles should be set as 'private' and under no circumstances should staff allow access to pupils, their families and or carers. Please refer to the SNMAT Social Media Policy.

Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed with their principal/head teacher. Where this is the case, correspondence should be kept to a minimum and be professional at all times in accordance with the ethos of this code.

Where former pupils who are under the age of 18 and still in receipt of education, in whatever educational setting, make personal contact with a member of staff, that member of staff must discuss their response to any such significant contact with their current line manager or principal/headteacher.

## **5. Confidentiality**

Staff and members of local governing bodies should also be mindful that requirements in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of pupils, their families, colleagues and any matters relating to the academy itself apply to all forms of communication, including social networking sites.

## **6. Use of personal mobile phones, laptops and tablets**

All staff are normally required to place any personal equipment capable of photographing children in a drawer/locker and such items should not be taken into the classroom. Such personal equipment is not to be used at any time, unless agreed by the principal/headteacher, during contact with pupils. Where appropriate, an academy owned mobile phone will be used – for example on visits and trips outside of the premises.

Individual academies should set out in writing their own expectations of the use of this equipment by staff and should review this in line with the agreed procedures. If there is a requirement in the teacher's role to take photographs of children for academy purposes this must be carried out using academy equipment that will be

provided and with the agreement of the principal/headteacher and in line with the agreed academy procedures.

## **7. Use of academy premises or facilities for work not connected with the academy**

Trust staff must not use the academy premises or facilities for activities which are not connected with their employment at the academy, without agreement from the principal/headteacher or local governing body. This includes the personal use of the academy email, telephones, computers, photocopiers, or other equipment. Internal email systems and academy computer equipment should always be used in accordance with the appropriate academy policies. However, Trade Union reps (as part of their job), can carry out their work on the premises.

## **8. Use of Alcohol and illegal drugs**

The use of Alcohol and illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable. All employees are expected to attend school in a fit state to work.

SNMAT will take all reasonable steps to prevent a member of staff carrying out work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit/ unsafe to undertake the work as a result of alcohol consumption or substance abuse.

Staff must not consume alcohol whilst they have responsibility for pupils or be under the influence of alcohol when they resume responsibility for pupils.

Alcohol may be consumed responsibly on the school premises when the Headteacher has given express permission, such as during an evening or weekend social function or a celebration event.

In the case of Residential Trips, a minimum of two staff members must be 'in charge'. One of these must not consume alcohol as they may be called upon to deal with an emergency which may require them to drive a vehicle.

## **9. Disclosure of information**

Staff must not disclose information given to them in confidence without consent except for that relating to safeguarding of a child which must be passed on to the designated Safeguarding Lead (refer to SNMAT Safeguarding Policy). Advice should always be sought from their line manager or principal/headteacher on the appropriate use of academy data and disclosure of academy information. Any actions taken by the academy must always be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Trust staff should not use confidential information obtained in the course of their employment with the academy for personal use, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it for unauthorised purposes.

## **10. Trust staff facing criminal charges**

Any member of staff, volunteer or governor who, during the course of their employment with the Trust, faces criminal charges or who receives a new caution or conviction must inform their line manager, or in the case of the principal/headteacher, the chair of the local governing body. Refer to the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and SNMAT Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. Conflict of interest**

Staff should declare any personal interest that could bring about conflict with the academy's interests. Trust staff must declare to their principal/headteacher or chair of the local governing body any financial interests or non-financial interests which could or could be perceived to conflict with their role within the academy. Staff are required not to take outside employment which conflicts with the academy's interests. Any staff intending to work for outside organisations should notify their principal/head teacher or chair of the local governing body, as appropriate.

## **12. Personal Relationships**

For employees who are in a relationship with a colleague, parent or carer, or any other person associated with the academy/trust we expect that they identify this to the Headteacher/line manager and ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or affect their professional judgement or responsibilities in any way.

Where an employee has managerial authority over another employee with whom they are in a close personal relationship, the academy/trust reserves the right to consider

the option to alter the lines of accountability to ensure a professional distance is maintained. This will be done following appropriate consultation with both employees.

## **13. Acceptance of gifts**

It is reasonable for a member of staff to accept modest gifts from pupils, especially at the end of an academy year or at Christmas. The giving of gifts to pupils should be in line with the agreed academy policy. Refer to the SNMAT Gifts Policy.

## **14. Dress Code**

In carrying out their duties all employees will have contact with pupils, parents, guardians, official visitors and members of the public. All employees are therefore required to present a formal professional image which requires being neat, clean, tidy and well groomed whilst at work, whether working on the academy's premises or elsewhere whilst representing the academy. Employees may wear articles of clothing that manifest their religion. This dress code applies during term time, or at any time when representing the academy in an official capacity (these times are known as 'public facing') The policy is underpinned by the principle that all members of staff will take a sensible and safe approach to dress and appearance, cleanliness and personal hygiene. This dress code refers to 'public facing' time. There will be occasions, including visits, INSET days and other events as determined by principals/headteachers, that this dress code does not apply.

All academy staff should set a positive role model for pupils with whom they have regular contact and are therefore required to adhere to the following standards:

- a Smart attire should be worn during all working hours. It is not acceptable to wear clothing that over exposes part of the body, e.g. stomach or chest, or that is transparent/see through.
  - o During periods of warm weather, staff clothing must remain appropriate. Staff should be aware that certain garments could be seen as provocative, e.g. short revealing/tight garments, and therefore are not acceptable for work.
  - o Denim is not acceptable during 'public facing' times. There are likely to be circumstances where denim is permissible. The principal / headteacher will make it clear when these occasions arise.
- b Male employees must wear a collar and tie except on those occasions specifically stipulated by the principal/headteacher, arising out of the particular circumstances such as the weather or the nature of work being undertaken. \*
- c In addition, where the academy provides an item or items of uniform to enable the employee to more appropriately carry out his/her duties, these must be worn at all times whilst on duty.
- d Hair should be neat, tidy and well groomed. Styles and colours of hair that, under normal working circumstances for employees in a school environment, are likely to be considered extreme in terms of fashion or unconventionality are not acceptable.
- e Any jewellery worn should not be excessive or unconventional. Injury arising from wearing inappropriate jewellery will invalidate any related claim against the academy. Tattoos should be covered, where practicably possible. Employees should not acquire additional tattoos which cannot be practically covered by clothing.
- f Badges carrying party political, promotional or other unacceptable slogans or statements shall not be worn whilst on duty. Clothes should be non-offensive and not contain provocative, sexist, or racist remarks. Clothing should not display logos or slogans relating to drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
- g Shoes must be formal and sensible for working in a busy professional environment and be appropriate for use in specialist facilities. Health and safety aspects of stairs and the ability to move quickly must be taken into consideration.
  - o 'Sensible' does not include flip flops which will impede safer lifting and handling issues and may constitute a trip hazard.

- o Trainers and other casual footwear are not considered acceptable in the same way as they are not acceptable wear for pupils.
- o Staff working in the Design Technology and Science environments must wear 'filled in' shoes in line with health and safety procedures.
- h Any employee whose job involves working with machinery or working with food must keep his/her hair either short or tied back and must not wear any jewellery other than a wedding ring. They must adhere to the dress code for those areas drawn up in relation to health and safety. These rules are in place for safety/hygiene reasons.
- i When an employee's dress is in contravention of this code, the principal/headteacher will have a discussion with the employee, identifying the issues and providing an opportunity for the employee to conform with the code. Under these circumstances, the employee may be required to return home to change. The employee will not be paid for the duration of his/her absence from work.
- j Staff in specific roles should wear appropriate protective clothing, e.g. lab coat, woodwork apron or coat, steel toe cap footwear, overalls.

**\* Sports clothing: PE Staff**

It is recognised that most activities performed by these colleagues require the wearing of tracksuits/shorts and trainers. It is acknowledged that due to the continuous nature of the activity, appropriate smart tracksuit attire is acceptable, as is the wearing of trainers. Tops must be collared, i.e. polo shirts.

Employees with existing or ongoing medical conditions that require specialist clothing (which is in contravention of the dress code) should liaise with the principal/headteacher. In such circumstances the principal / headteacher may agree to waive the dress code requirements.

## **15. Online Teaching Sessions**

If it should be necessary to teach pupils remotely staff must adhere to the following points:

Teaching sessions must be facilitated through a secure system, e.g. Microsoft TEAMS

- Sessions should ideally be in groups
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background. Microsoft Teams has the facility to blur the background when on a video call.

- The live class should be recorded and backed up elsewhere.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background

### 1 to 1 virtual sessions

Where these are deemed necessary the following must be in place:

- A clear rationale for the need for 1-1 sessions
- A risk assessment
- A code of conduct between the academy/teacher/pupil/parent
- Completion of a virtual teaching log

**There will be other instances that occur in academy life that will need referral to the head teacher or governing body.**

The contents of this policy should be read in conjunction with “Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings” Revised October 2015 by the Safer Recruitment Consortium from an original document by the DfE.

## **Appendix A**

### **New duty for health and social care professionals and teachers to report female genital mutilation (FGM) to the police**

What is the new duty?

On 31 October 2015 a new duty was introduced that requires health and social care professionals and teachers to report ‘known’ cases of FGM in girls aged under 18 to the police. For example, if a doctor sees that a girl aged under 18 has had FGM they will need to make a report to the police. Or, if a girl tells her teacher that she has had FGM, the teacher will need to report this to the police. What will happen after the case has been reported to the police? FGM is a serious crime and the police will need to investigate each reported case appropriately. The police will work with social care professionals to make sure that the girl is safe and her needs are put first. Why is it being introduced? When a girl has undergone FGM, a serious crime has taken place so it is very important that the police are involved as soon as possible. This will make sure that a proper investigation can take place. The purpose of the new duty is to help make sure that professionals have the confidence to confront FGM and to help increase the number of referrals to the police so that cases can be investigated appropriately. What the new duty won’t do It doesn’t mean that police will take action without consulting appropriately with social care professionals and other relevant professionals. It won’t require professionals to report cases to the police where they suspect FGM may have been carried out or think a girl may be at risk. The duty also doesn’t apply to women aged 18 or over. Professionals will follow existing safeguarding procedures in these cases.

## **Summary: Mandatory reporting of FGM\***

Duty applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales.

Requires these professionals to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they:

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

\*introduced in Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015

**Code of Conduct - record of staff training.**

I have read, understood and agree to work within the requirements of the code of conduct of..... Academy

[illegible]