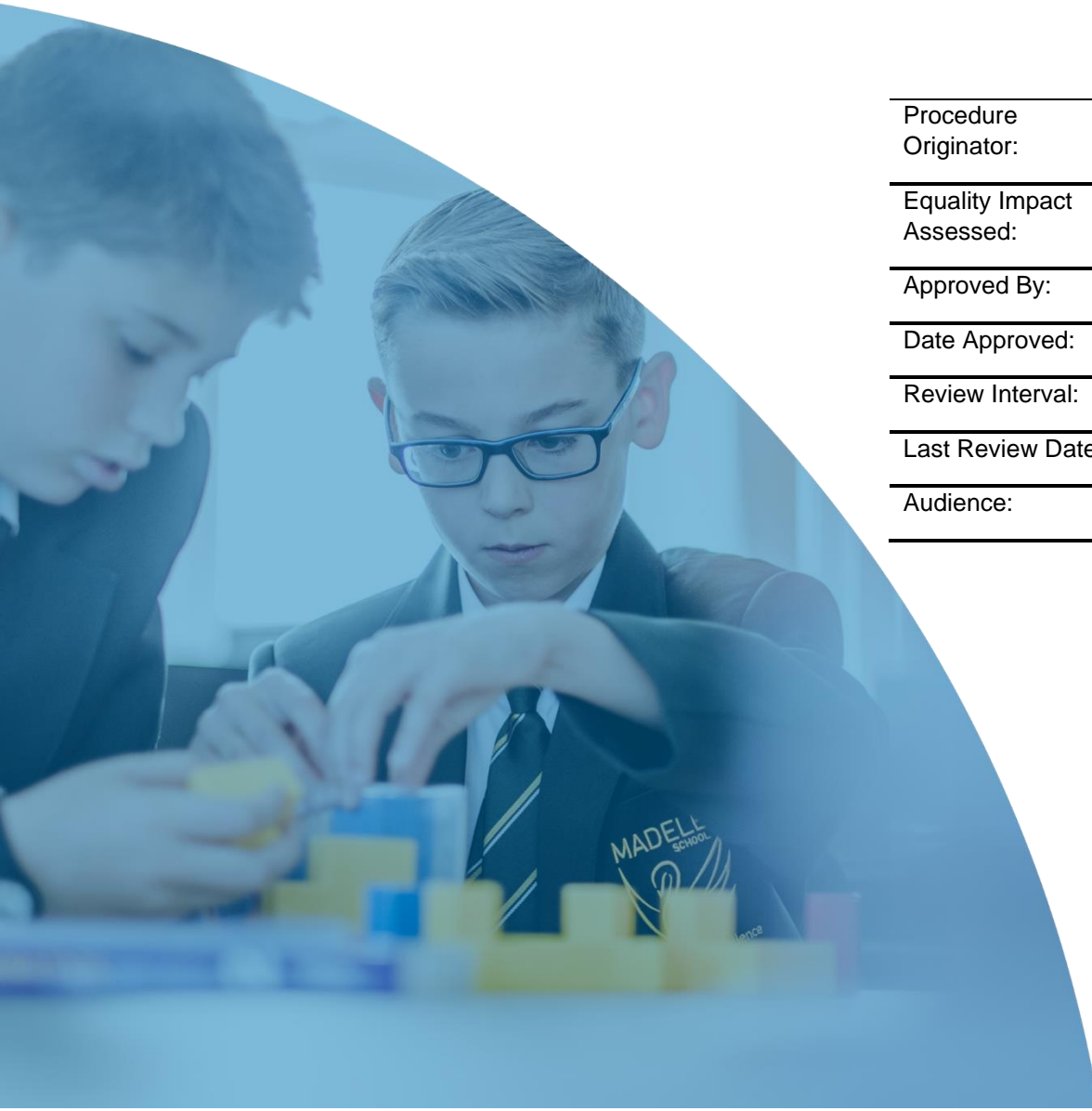


# Code of Conduct Policy

Procedure Originator:	P HARRISON
Equality Impact Assessed:	
Approved By:	CEO
Date Approved:	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Review Interval:	ANNUAL
Last Review Date	24 <sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020
Audience:	Employees



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff within the academies of the Shaw Education Trust. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring. As the Shaw Education Trust is based across a number of sites, it is important that the policy is understood and applied consistently.
- 1.2 This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils/students and the academy
- 1.3 Academy staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils/students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils and students within the academy.
- 1.4 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the academy and of the Trust, both inside and outside working hours and work setting.
- 1.5 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the academy regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
  - All members of staff including teaching and support staff
  - Volunteers, including Academy Councillors
  - Casual workers
  - Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
  - Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.
- 1.6 All academy staff must read and agree to comply with this policy.
- 1.7 Breach or failure to observe this policy will result in action being taken under the academy disciplinary procedures for employees including, but not limited to, dismissal, and discontinuation of engagement with volunteers and agency staff.

## 2. Professional Behaviour and Conduct

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. There is an expectation that all staff will

work in line with the Academy and Trust values at all times (Appendix 1). The Shaw Education Trust expects staff to treat each other, pupils/students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to pupils and ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff must show fairness in their treatment of children, other staff and adults, and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils/students, making jokes at the expense of pupils/students, discriminating against or favouring pupils/students and sarcasm.
- 2.4 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the academy and must not do or say anything which may bring the academy, the academy council or the Shaw Education Trust into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside the academy and responsibilities within the academy. Staff should act in accordance with the academy's policies and procedures at all times.

### **3. Dress and Appearance**

- 3.1 The Shaw Education Trust recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress and appear in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.
- 3.2 Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

### **4. Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

- 4.1 The academies of the Shaw Education Trust are non-smoking sites. This includes the use of e-cigarettes and any other smoking related material. Staff must not smoke on academy premises or outside academy gates. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the academy grounds.
- 4.2 Staff must not smoke whilst working with or directly supervising pupils' offsite.
- 4.3 Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other illegal substances on academy premises, or on academy business.
- 4.4 It is the responsibility of employees in consultation with their GP or Pharmacist to ensure that prescribed or over the counter medication does not impact upon their conduct or ability to work safely or to required

standard during periods of duty. Any employee with concerns in this regard should confer with their manager; the manager will determine whether any further action would be appropriate, such as an adjustment to duties and/or referral to Occupational Health.

- 4.5 Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at academy/student events (i.e. Leaving Proms, residential visits) both within the academy premises and outside the academy setting.

## 5. Relationships with Pupils/Students

- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 Under no circumstances should employees in The Shaw Education Trust, academy council members and volunteers add a prior student in school within the last five years as a friend on a personal social networking site. The Trust's advice is that you delete a child who is currently at school whether you already knew them or not.
- 5.3 Contact with pupils/students and ex-pupils / students, other than relatives<sup>1</sup>, should be through each academy's authorised mechanisms. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all personal social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils/students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Principal immediately if they have concerns.
- 5.4 Academy staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil/student of the academy, other than relatives, on any non-academy authorised social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils/students or their parents. Staff must read the academy's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.
- 5.5 All staff must have full awareness and understanding of the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance<sup>2</sup>, Working

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'relative' throughout this policy extends to family friends and neighbours. Where this is the case, this should be disclosed to the Principal.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance<sup>3</sup>, the Shaw Education Trust's Safeguarding Policy and Social Media Policy.

## 6. Infatuations

- 6.1 It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- 6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

## 7. Gifts/Hospitality

- 7.1 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils/students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If a member of staff is unsure whether to accept a gift they should consult their line manager.
- 7.2 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils/students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year. Refer to the Shaw Education Trust Gifts and Hospitality policy<sup>4</sup> for further guidance.
- 7.3 Staff must not accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to your line manager and recorded.
- 7.4 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils/students and any reward to pupils/students should be in accordance with the academy's behaviour and rewards policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

## 8. Physical Contact with Pupils

- 8.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.shaw-education.org.uk/uploads/policies/Gifts%20and%20Hospitality%20Policy.pdf>

inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

- 8.2 Staff should refer to the Academy's Physical Intervention/Positive Handling/ Intimate Care / Touch Policies/Safeguarding Policy, and when visiting other Academies, staff should make sure they are familiar with other Academies policies.

### **9. Child in distress**

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a pupil/student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the DSL. If a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from the DSL.

### **10. Showers and changing**

- 10.1 Pupils/students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing or showering after PE/games or swimming. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils/students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 10.2 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change or shower in the same place as children.
- 10.3 Reference should also be made to the academy's intimate care policy (where applicable) and individual students' risk assessments or care plans.

### **11. One to one situations**

- 11.1 Staff working individually with pupils/students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils/students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil/student and to themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas. This is with the exception of personal care situations. Where it is



necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

### 12. Transporting pupils

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils/students offsite, for example sports fixtures, swimming lessons or other out of academy activities. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.
- 12.2 Staff must ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff must ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured for business use and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.3 Staff must ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Staff must never transport pupils/students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12.4 Prior to transporting pupils offsite consent must be obtained from pupil/students' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils/students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer.
- 12.5 Only in exceptional circumstances should personal cars be used to transport students/pupils off site, and in such cases two members of staff should travel in the vehicle, unless in an emergency or where the child is at risk. If staff are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting students they should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded, and seat belts are worn.

### 13. Online Safety (e-safety)

- 13.1 Staff must follow the academy's Acceptable Use Policy which outlines guidance and requirements for the use of IT systems including social media. Staff must have regard at all times for the reputation of the Trust and their academy, and of course the safety of all pupils.
- 13.2 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should

exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.

- 13.3 Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or formal academy time, except in the case of emergencies or exceptional circumstances. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the academy site such as changing rooms and toilets.
- 13.4 Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to academy are the responsibility of the device owner. The Shaw Education Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

## 14. Photography, video and images of children

- 14.1 Many academy activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra academy activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a pupil/student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil/student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil/student, remembering that some pupils/students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
- 14.2 Staff must follow the academy's Safeguarding/ E-Safety/ Social Media/Acceptable Use/Data Protection Policies at all times.
- 14.3 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 14.4 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils/students should only be taken using academy equipment for purposes authorised by the academy and should be stored securely and only on academy equipment.
- 14.5 All photographs/stills and video footage should be referenced in planning and available for scrutiny if requested. Staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.



- 14.6 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils/students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils/students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils/students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

### **15. Confidentiality (See also the Policy on Data Protection).**

- 15.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils/students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student on a need to know basis.
- 15.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil/student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil/student.
- 15.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate academy procedure. It must not be discussed outside the academy, including with the pupil/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the academy except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 15.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with the academy's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil/student.
- 15.5 Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding

services<sup>5</sup> for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.

- 15.6 Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and academy councillors should communicate to the media about the academy. In the case of staff union representatives communicating to the media, prior notification should be given to the Director of Operations.
- 15.7 Staff must adhere at all times to the data protection policy and must ensure that all personal information is appropriately protected and encrypted.

## 16. Whistleblowing

- 16.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
- 16.2 All academy staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to the Shaw Education Trust's whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils/students may be at risk.

## 17. Safeguarding Children - 'Low-level Concerns'

- 17.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 has included within its section on 'Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors' (part Four) a new section on 'low-level concerns'.
- 17.2 The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the higher threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in an inappropriate manner.
- 17.3 Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
  - being over friendly with children;
  - having favourites;
  - taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;

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<sup>5</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419628/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_safeguarding\\_practitioners.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf)

- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
  - using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- 17.4 If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children, then:
- this should be referred to the headteacher/principal or designated member of senior staff, e.g. DSL;
  - where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor of an independent school; and
  - in the event of concerns/allegations about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs). Details of your local LADO should be easily accessible on your local authority's website.
- 17.5 It is vital that staff share any 'low-level concern' they may have. This is to ensure we have a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's or college's values and expected behaviour which are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

## Appendix 1

### Our Values

#### TO BE PUPIL AND PEOPLE CENTRED

To ensure everything we do realises the full potential of the pupils we are here to help. We will provide caring, tailored and supportive environments where young people can flourish. We will ensure that all members of the school community are the focus of our activity and as servant leaders we shall enable their success.

#### TO ACT WITH INTEGRITY

To be an Organisation that is open and transparent, actively embraces equality and diversity and has an honest, inclusive and respectful culture which everyone can trust.

#### TO BE INNOVATIVE

To be a creative, forward-thinking Organisation that finds new ways of doing things. To break down barriers to learning, stimulating exciting futures and securing independent living. We will be relentless in our pursuit of the excellence which has the power to change lives.

#### TO BE BEST IN CLASS

To be a top performing education provider that helps every single pupil on their journey towards achieving their potential. We believe our staff are our greatest asset. We will support leaders, teachers and staff to provide exceptional teaching, learning and outcomes.

#### TO BE ACCOUNTABLE

Shaw Education Trust, its schools and staff are accountable to our pupils and stakeholders. We will demonstrate personal responsibility by carrying out our roles to the best of our ability and in adherence with our values.



We believe, you achieve

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