

Code of Conduct Policy (Trust Employees)

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V1.3	03.05.2018	J Amerigo	S Carrick	Social Media added to policy	J Amerigo	
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Version:	Date:	Policy Owner:	Amendments made by:	Details of amendments made:	Reviewed by:	Approved by:
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V6.2	24.05.22	R Inchiliffe	A Mackenzie	Minor amendment Updated Appendix D (Hospitality Register).	W. Turpin / Sent to Policy Owner 25.05.22	
V6.3	28.11.22	R Inchiliffe	W Turpin	Removal of Annex & F relating to Governors		
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Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Policy Owner: **R Inchiliffe**

The scheduled review date for this policy is **February 2025**

Values and Ethos

Our values and ethos are inclusive, and child centred. Our Trust is founded on the principles of inclusivity, diversity, and fairness, and they are fundamental to our delivery of exceptional learning experiences.

EVAT stands for:

- **Excellence** and high standards
 - a can-do culture and no-excuses ethos
- **Values driven** with a deep sense of purpose
 - putting children and young people first
 - behaving ethically
- **Ambition** and aspiration for all
 - irrespective of background or barriers – being truly inclusive
- **Teamwork**
 - we do more, better and faster, together

We are a village. We collaborate, with our learners, their families and our communities, to provide exceptional education so that all the children and young people we serve achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our Ethos is to:

- Create a nurturing and friendly atmosphere and provide an environment where everyone feels valued for who they are
- Bring out the best in every child and young person and meet the full range of their individual needs
- Provide different and unique experiences, challenges and activities
- Show tolerance and respect for each other
- Prepare our children and young people for lifelong learning
- Improve the life chances of every child and young person we serve.

Note - Throughout this policy, the Chief Executive / Chief Operating Officer / Executive Principals / Principals / Head of School / Line Managers will be referred to by the term Manager or Supervisor.

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1. Introduction / Legal Framework

- 1.1. High standards of professional conduct are important in our Trust as they reflect ethos and have a major impact on the achievement of our strategic objectives. The purpose of having a Code of Conduct is to:
- make a clear statement about the standards of conduct expected of employees of the Trust;
 - ensure the highest standards of conduct by identifying Trust standards which sit alongside professional codes and guidelines;
 - help all employees to act in a way which upholds the Trust's standards and at the same time, protect them from criticism, misunderstanding or complaint;
 - help build trust between the Trust and the people who come into contact with those working for it.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Code of Conduct applies to:
- All employees of the Trust centrally employed Trust staff and volunteers.
 - Individuals providing services for the Trust e.g. contractors, agencies, self-employed people, and those working for the Trust as part of partnerships with the Trust.
- 2.2. All employees and volunteers will be supplied with a copy of this Code, against which their conduct will be measured.
- 2.3. The term 'employee' is used throughout the code but should be taken to refer to both employees and volunteers as appropriate.

3. Standards and Attitude

- 3.1. All employees of the Trust are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to pupils, members of the public, governors, trustees, members and fellow employees.
- 3.2. The attitude of employees in dealing with people reflects on the Trust, so it is important that they are helpful, polite and courteous. People's impression of the Trust is strongly influenced by the views of the people who work for it. Whether or not employees are aware of it, the comments they make will be accepted by others. Employees, therefore, need to carefully consider the effect of what they say and how they say it.

- 3.3. All employees are expected to report to their manager or supervisor any perceived or anticipated impropriety, or any breach of procedure or policy of the Trust.
- 3.4. In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety, as public perceptions are very important. Employees should at all times avoid any appearance of improper conduct that may give rise to suspicion.
- 3.5. There are a number of principles that exemplify the standards that are required. They are set out below. A number of these aspects are dealt with in more detail within this Code.

4. Principles

- 4.1. *Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity* - all employees must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.
- 4.2. *Accountability* - all employees must be accountable to the Trust for their actions.
- 4.3. *Respect for Others* - all employees must:
 - *treat others with respect;*
 - *not discriminate unlawfully against any person; and*
 - *treat those in a governance role professionally.*
- 4.4. *Stewardship* - all employees must:
 - *Use any public funds entrusted to or handled by them in a responsible and lawful manner; and*
 - *Not make personal use of property or facilities of the Trust unless properly authorised to do so.*
- 4.5. *Personal Interests* - all employees must not in their official or personal capacity:
 - *Allow their personal interests to conflict with the Trust's requirements; or*
 - *Use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.*
- 4.6. *Declaring Interests* - all employees must comply with any of the Trust's requirements:
 - *To declare interests; and*
 - *To declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of their employment.*

- 4.7. *Openness* - All employees must not:
- disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless they are required by law to do so; and
 - prevent another person from gaining access to information which that person is entitled to by law.
- 4.8. *Duty of Trust* - all employees must at all times act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.
- 4.9. *Safeguarding* - all employees must undertake their work in accordance with requirements laid down (for their job) in support of the Trust's duties for safeguarding children and young people.

5. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

- 5.1. The Trust recognises the importance of an open, transparent culture with clear communication and accountability. It is the Trust's aim to be as open as possible about all its activities. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Different rules apply in different situations. If an employee is in any doubt as to whether they can release any particular information, they should always check with their Principal, Executive Principal, or the Chief Executive first. See the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy.
- 5.2. The confidentiality of information received in the course of an employee's duties should be respected and must never be used for personal or political gain. Employees must not knowingly pass information on to others who might use it in such a way. If an employee believes that information should be disclosed in the public interest, they should follow the Confidential Reporting Policy before doing so. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 5.3. Employees must not communicate confidential information or documents to others who do not have a legitimate right to know. Furthermore, information which is stored, whether on computer systems or manually, must only be disclosed in accordance with the Trust's GDPR Data Protection Policy.
- 5.4. Information given in the course of an employee's duties should be accurate and fair and never designed to mislead.

6. Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy

- 6.1. Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Trust. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Trust. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 6.2. The Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, employees (and those associated with the Trust) who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Trust's work are expected to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 6.3. In order to ensure that this can happen, the Trust has adopted a Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy.
- 6.4. The Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy is intended to provide a confidential way for employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Trust's work or activities to come forward and voice those concerns.
- 6.5. The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the Trust on School premises: for example, agency staff, builders, drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Trust in their own premises.

7. Political Neutrality

- 7.1. Employees must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and must always perform their duties in an objective manner.

8. Relationships with Pupils

- 8.1. It is important that all working relationships, and relationships between employees and pupils, are conducted in a professional manner. It is an abuse of the professional relationship between an employee and pupil for the employee to:
 - *Enter into an improper association with a pupil, either inside or outside of the workplace, e.g. school trips, or when using social media such as Facebook, Twitter etc;*
 - *Commit any acts against a pupil which are illegal;*
 - *Show undue personal favour or disfavour towards a pupil;*

- Endeavour to exert an undue influence on personal attitudes, opinions or behaviour that is in no way connected with the work of the Trust.

9. Safeguarding of Pupils

9.1. Employees must have a duty to safeguard pupils from:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect.

9.2. The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Employees must ensure that they are familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy.

9.3. Employees have a duty to report if they believe if any other member of staff or volunteer 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
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

9.4. Employees should also report low-level concerns – 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 Trust may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Trust's code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

9.5. 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 or other device
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

- 9.6. All concerns should be reported to a Principal, or in the absence of a Principal, the relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Bullying and Harassment

- 10.1. The Trust is firmly committed to equal opportunities and believes that every employee has the right to work in a safe environment without the fear of discrimination, harassment or abuse. The Trust will not tolerate or condone harassment or bullying in any form. Any claims of bullying and / or harassment will be dealt with under the Trust's Grievance Policy.

11. Appointment of Staff

- 11.1. It is unlawful for appointments to be made on the basis of anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. Employees involved in making appointments should do everything possible to ensure that they are made on the basis of merit and in accordance with the prevailing Trust policy on Recruitment, Selection and Induction and regulations on safer recruitment.
- 11.2. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not become involved in any appointment or any other decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, if they are a relative of an applicant, or have a close personal relationship with him or her, nor where they have the opportunity to benefit, directly or indirectly, from an appointment without the express prior approval of the Trust.
- 11.3. In this paragraph, 'relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, child of a partner, brother, sister grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding person.
- 11.4. 'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who are involved in a romantic relationship.
- 11.5. 'Close personal relationship' would include a person not employed by the Trust with whom an employee has a close business connection.
- 11.6. Personal relationships between colleagues who work together can give rise to conflicts of interest. Therefore, employees who have entered into a close personal or romantic relationship with a colleague are required to disclose this fact to their Manager. Any information declared or disclosed should be recorded on both employees' personal files and treated in strict confidence.

- 11.7. This information should only be considered to ensure that the existence of the relationship does not impact on the smooth running of the Trust.

12. The Local Community and Service Users

- 12.1. Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient service delivery to that community in accordance with the policies of the Trust. This may involve dealing with troubled, angry and frustrated parents and carers, although employees are entitled not to be expected to place their personal health, safety and welfare at risk.

13. Contractors

- 13.1. All relationships of a business or personal nature with external contractors or suppliers, or potential contractors or suppliers, must be declared to the Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- 13.2. Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with the Trust's Finance Policy and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives.

14. Outside Commitments

- 14.1. The Trust recognises that employees are entitled to their private lives. However, an employee must not be in a position where their outside commitments present a conflict of interest. Staff are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty and their private interests should not be such as to have the potential for allegations of impropriety to be sustained, thereby bringing the Trust into disrepute.

15. Conduct

- 15.1. Whether in or outside work, employees must not conduct themselves in any way that creates doubt as to their suitability for their post or brings the Trust into disrepute. This includes conduct that would bring into question their suitability to work with children.
- 15.2. All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.
- 15.3. There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise

their position in the workplace or indicate unsuitability to work with children or young people. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.

- 15.4. Adults in contact with children and young people should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
- 15.5. The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and may require careful consideration by the Trust as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and young people in the workplace.

16. Dress and Appearance

- 16.1. An employee's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, employees should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their role, which may be different to that adopted in their personal life.
- 16.2. Employees who work with pupils should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress inappropriately, or appear in a manner that could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.
- 16.3. This means employees should wear clothing which:
 - *is appropriate for their role;*
 - *is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative;*
 - *does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding;*
 - *is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans;*
 - *is not considered to be discriminatory.*
- 16.4. Jewellery / piercings must be removed where they are a risk to health and safety or where their appearance may be considered inappropriate.

17. Additional Work

- 17.1. Employees are able to undertake paid or unpaid (voluntary) work in addition to their existing contract of employment, providing it does not conflict with the performance of their duties in the role for which they are employed. In order to assess whether or not there might be a conflict, employees are required to complete a form requesting permission from their Principal before taking any outside employment. Forms are available on Teams
- 17.2. The Trust will not unreasonably stop employees from undertaking additional employment, but this employment must not, in the Trust's view, conflict with or

be detrimental to its interests, or weaken public confidence in the conduct of its business.

17.3. An employee who wishes to take on additional work must ensure that:

- the additional hours worked do not contravene the Working Time Regulations or otherwise give the Trust cause for concern about health and safety at work. (Details of the Working Time Regulations are available from the People Team).
- the outside work does not place the employee in a position where their duties and private interests' conflict.
- the outside work does not damage, or potentially damage, public confidence in the Trust's conduct or business.

18. Additional Work (Internal)

18.1. Employees must not undertake private or personal work, paid or unpaid, of any description in working hours or on Trust premises unless they have been given specific permission by the Chief Executive. Where approval is given any payments will be made in accordance with the Trust's Pay Policy.

19. Refusal of a Request to Take on Additional Work

19.1. If an employee has their request to take on additional work refused and wishes to challenge this, they should speak to the Chief Executive or consider raising a grievance under the Trust's grievance procedure.

20. Books, Training Materials, and Intellectual Property Rights

20.1. If an employee writes a book for payment on subjects relating to their work for the Trust they must seek the permission of the Trust in writing through the Principal.

20.2. The Trust retains intellectual property rights for work undertaken by employees. Research, reports, designs, drawings, Internet publishing e.g. blogs, software and other developments or similar work, when created in the course of an employee's normal duties, remain the property of the Trust. These should not be removed from Trust premises or passed on to third parties by any employee acting in a private capacity without the express consent of the Chief Executive.

21. Patents and Inventions

21.1. Any matter, or thing capable of being patented under the Patents Act 1977, made, developed or discovered by an employee, either alone or with others, whilst in the performance of their duties should be disclosed to the Trust through

the Principal and, subject to the provisions of the Patents Act, it will belong to and be the absolute property of the Trust.

22. Computer Use

- 22.1. The Trust wants employees to use computers to the full and to feel competent and comfortable about doing so. However, it is essential that computers are used appropriately. Any reference to computers should be taken to mean all computer equipment and any associated technology.

23. Misuse of Computers

- 23.1. The misuse of computers is a serious matter and may result in employees being subject to disciplinary and, where appropriate, legal action.
- 23.2. Guidance documents exist within the Trust in relation to the use of computers and information technology. Employees must be familiar with and abide by the Trust's Policy on computer use.
- 23.3. Private use of Trust facilities, such as computers (including use of the Internet), stationery and fax machines, is governed by these documents. Employees should not arrange to receive correspondence, telephone calls and fax messages in the Trust related to outside work or private interests.
- 23.4. An employee who is aware of, or suspects, that abuse of computers, email or the Internet is taking place is under a duty to report this immediately under the Trust's Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy (see paragraph 6 above).
- 23.5. The Trust will monitor the use of computers, etc. without notice. A record of any sites accessed by staff is automatically stored on the system and may be examined later if misuse is suspected.

24. Use of Social Media

- 24.1. The Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT) understands that social media are a growing part of life outside of school. The Trust and our schools have a responsibility to safeguard pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school. Please see the Trust's Social Media Policy for full guidance.

Guidelines for Responsible Use of Social Media

- 24.2. You should make it clear in social media postings, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address.

- 24.3. Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications that will be published on the internet for anyone to see.
- 24.4. If you disclose your affiliation with the Trust or Academy on your profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not represent those of your employer (unless you are authorised to speak on our behalf). You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to pupils, parents and colleagues.
- 24.5. If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with your manager.
- 24.6. If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on us, you should contact your manager immediately.

Monitoring

- 24.7. We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.

25. Personal Interests

- 25.1. Employees may have a variety of personal interests, which may from time to time impact on their role for the Trust. To protect the Trust and the employee from any accusations of wrongdoing the Trust has in place a number of safeguards which demonstrate that these interests are not allowed to influence the way the Trust conducts its business.
- 25.2. Whatever an employee's role within the organisation, they must declare any financial or non-financial interests which could bring about conflict with the Trust's interests to their Principal, Executive Principal, Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive. This could include Trustees, Governors, etc.
- 25.3. If employees are in any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, they should bring the matter to the attention of their Principal, Executive Principal, Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive so that a decision can be made as to how best to proceed.
- 25.4. Employees must not make, or become involved with, any official or professional decisions about matters in which they have a personal interest.

25.5. The Trust is required to establish systems of control to ensure that any business or personal interest by key members of staff, Trustees and Governors are recorded. Please refer to Annex A for further information.

26. Gifts and Hospitality

26.1. A potential source of conflict between public and private interests is the offer of gifts, hospitality or benefits in kind to employees in connection with their official duties. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence.

27. Receiving Gifts

27.1. Casual gifts offered to employees by contractors, organisations, firms, parents and carers or individuals such as calendars, diaries, pens, food, drink, flowers and other small gifts need not be declared. The general rule is that a gift below the value of £25 does not need to be declared. However, it will not be appropriate to accept a gift below that value if it is more than minimal or repeated regularly and may be perceived as an inducement.

27.2. In cases where employees are given alcoholic beverages as gifts they need to ensure that they do not contravene the Alcohol at Work Policy.

27.3. Employees should declare any personal gift offered to them, or to a member of their family, with a value of £25 or over by any person or organisation having dealings with the Trust.

27.4. Employees should seek advice from their Line Manager or Principal about whether it is appropriate to accept a gift with a value of £25 or over. Where a Principal is offered a gift, they should consult the Chief Executive. Where the Chief Operating Officer is offered a gift, they should consult the Chief Executive. Where the Chief Executive is offered a gift, they should consult the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

27.5. A checklist is provided at Annex C, which should be used to help line managers, Principals, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Executive and Chair decide whether or not it is appropriate to accept a gift.

27.6. When a gift needs to be refused, this should be done with tact and courtesy, because the offer of gifts is common custom and practice in the commercial world, particularly at Christmas time. If the gift is simply delivered to the Trust, there may be a problem returning it, in which case it should be reported immediately to the Chief Executive.

27.7. The Chief Executive will keep a record of all gifts and hospitality offered to employees or the Trust where the value exceeds £25, including when a gift was declined. See Annex D. If you are offered a gift with a value over £25, even if

you decline it, you must email the Executive Support Officer with the detail they require to complete the Hospitality Register. The Register is a public document and is reviewed by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. The following should be recorded:

- *Nature of the gift/hospitality*
- *Value of the gift/hospitality*
- *Name of the person/company offering the gift/hospitality*
- *Date gift/hospitality accepted/refused*
- *Name of the employee/Trustee/governor offered the gift or hospitality*

27.8. In the case where it is believed a member of staff, Trustee, or Governor has not declared a gift or hospitality, then a formal investigation will be instigated by the Chief Operating Officer (or Chief Executive if the matter relates to the Chief Operating Officer, or Chair if the matter relates to the Chief Executive). If misconduct is indicated, disciplinary procedures may ensue.

28. Providing Gifts

28.1. The general principle is that the Trust and its Academies do not purchase or provide gifts except in exceptional and appropriate circumstances. When making gifts, the trust must ensure the value is reasonable, is within its scheme of delegation, the decision is documented, and achieves propriety and regularity in the use of public funds.

28.2. Comfort Gifts: the purpose of a comfort gift is to provide a small gift to members of staff or Governors at times of serious illness or bereavement, or to supplement a collection that colleagues have already organised. Payment is at the discretion of the Chief Executive, who must approve any purchase before payment or reimbursement is claimed. Examples of gifts might include flowers, chocolates, or a basket of fruit. Monetary gifts should not be given.

28.3. Although there are no hard and fast rules about the frequency of making gifts to the same individual, the Chief Executive must have due regard to the propriety of spending public funds.

28.4. Purchase of Comfort Gift: once authority is given, the individual's line manager can purchase a gift. A suggested value would be about £25.

28.5. Additionally, giving or offering promotional material(s) constitute gifts. Please seek further advice from the Chief Executive and the Finance Team before placing any orders or entering into any contract or agreement to purchase items intended to be given in a promotional capacity.

28.6. Further guidance in respect of offering gifts and hospitality is provided in Annex E.

29. Receiving Hospitality

- 29.1. Offers of hospitality are a normal part of the courtesies of business life but in the publicly funded sector it is important for employees to avoid creating an appearance of improper influence, thus undermining public confidence.
- 29.2. Hospitality is sometimes offered to representatives of the Trust in an official or formal capacity. Hospitality can take many forms and could include attending exhibitions, seminars, sporting events, shows or concerts. Training events with very low training content and free catering, drink or transport may also be hospitality. Any gifts and hospitality given or received must be recorded on the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Register (see Annex D). The Register is held by the PA to the Chief Executive and entries are signed by the authorising person (Line Manager, Principal, Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer or Chair). Its contents are reviewed annually by the Trust's Finance and Resources Committee.
- 29.3. Employees need to exercise discretion when accepting offers of hospitality, particularly when the host is seeking to do business with the Trust or who may stand to benefit in some way from dealing with the Trust.
- 29.4. Offers of hospitality should only be accepted where there is a clear benefit to the Trust in doing so e.g. networking, building contacts. If there is no or limited benefit employees should not attend.
- 29.5. Hospitality offered by charitable or social organisations, usually in connection with an invitation to speak to the body, can be accepted.

30. Providing Hospitality

- 30.1. Hospitality, such as a light refreshment, beverage or small food item, should only be used where it is the best way to take forward official business. An example might include a meeting of Governors or Trustees, or a meeting with external partners where the meeting covers a mealtime or attendees have travelled a long distance. Hospitality should not be provided at meetings where all attendees are Trust employees unless there are exceptional supporting business needs, e.g. staff are working through lunch to achieve an important and urgent outcome. All requests for hospitality require advance authorisation by the Trust's Finance Manager, who will ensure compliance with the guidance above.
- 30.2. It is Trust policy that Trust funding should not be used for the purchase of alcohol.

31. Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

- 31.1. When an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Trust activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- 31.2. Offers of sponsorship are a normal part of the courtesies of business life but in the publicly funded sector it is important for employees to avoid creating an appearance of improper influence, thus undermining public confidence.
- 31.3. Where the Trust wishes to sponsor an event or services, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full prior disclosure to the Chief Executive of any such interest. Similarly, where the Trust through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.
- 31.4. A potential source of conflict between public and private interests is the offer of sponsorship, gifts, hospitality or benefits in kind to employees in connection with their official duties. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence.

32. Equality

- 32.1. All members of the local community, parents and carers, and other Trust employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity. Employees should become familiar with and observe all Trust policies relating to equality issues in addition to the requirements of the law.

33. Tender Procedures

- 33.1. Employees should exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, contractors and subcontracts.
- 33.2. Employees responsible for engaging or supervising contractors and who have previously had, or currently have, a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with a particular contractor, must declare that relationship to the Chief Executive.
- 33.3. If employees become privy to confidential information on tenders or costs relating to external contractors, they must not disclose that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.

- 33.4. All employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current, or recent former, employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in any capacity.

34. Corruption

- 34.1. The Trust takes a very firm stance against all forms of bribery and corruption and has adopted Anti-Fraud Corruption and Bribery Policy and Procedures. This document is set out in Annex H, attached to this Code.
- 34.2. Employees must be aware that bribing another person or receiving a bribe are serious criminal offences under the Bribery Act. Penalties include fines and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- 34.3. The offence of 'bribing another person' will be committed if you offer, promise or give financial or other advantage to another person with the aim of inducing or rewarding them to perform an activity or function improperly. The activity or function could relate to an external business or commercial activity or any public function (for instance done in house or by another public sector body).
- 34.4. The offence of 'being bribed' will be committed if you request or agree to receive or accept any financial or other advantage in return for improperly performing or allowing the improper performance of an activity or function. The activity or function could be any public function or something you do during the course of your employment.
- 34.5. For employees' own protection, if anyone makes an approach which seems to them, or might seem to a third party, to be aimed at obtaining some form of preferential treatment, or in any suspicious circumstances in connection with a contract, you must report the matter to your Principal, Executive Principal or the Chief Operating Officer or in respect of the Principal, Executive Principal or Chief Operating Officer, to the Chief Executive.

35. Financial Procedure Rules

- 35.1. All employees involved in financial activities and transactions on behalf of the Trust, including budgetary control, operation of bank accounts, payments of accounts, payments of salaries and wages, petty cash and orders of works, goods or services must follow the Academy Trust Handbook or the Trust's Finance Policy.
- 35.2. They must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and strive to ensure value for money.
- 35.3. Information with regard to payments to trustees can be found in Annex I – Payments to Trustees, Governors and Trustees / Governors' Allowances Policy.

36. Contact with the Press and Media

- 36.1. Employees are not permitted to give reports or speak to the press and media, unless this is an aspect that is clearly required within their role, or they have been given permission to do so by their Principal, Executive Principal or the Chief Executive on matters relating to their employment within the Trust. Employees with this responsibility must guard themselves against declaring a view which is contrary to a position taken by the Trust, and which may be deemed to be critical of that decision.
- 36.2. Outside of working hours, an employee is entitled to voice their opinion on issues affecting the local community e.g. at a neighbourhood forum. However, employees have a general duty of care to avoid a conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the Trust.
- 36.3. A Trade Union official or member may be asked to comment by the media on, for instance, an industrial dispute. Any opinion expressed should be clearly given in their capacity as a Trade Union official or member.

Talks to Other Bodies, Radio and Television Interviews, Contributions to Publications etc.

- 36.4. Where an employee is invited to give a talk to an outside body, or participate in a broadcast, or contribute an article to a professional journal, or the like, on a matter related to their employment or on a personal interest which would be relevant to that employment, the following guidelines apply:
- 36.5. Acceptance of such an invitation shall be at the discretion of the Principal, Executive Principal, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive. In the event of a Principal wishing to follow this course of action, it shall be at the discretion of the Chief Executive and, in the event of the Chief Executive wishing to follow this course of action, the Chair of Trust Board of Trustees.
- 36.6. Unless an employee is officially representing the Trust, they should make it clear that they are speaking or contributing on a personal basis and that their views do not necessarily represent those of the Trust.
- 36.7. Employees should avoid commenting on matters which could be regarded as contentious or sensitive so far as the Trust is concerned, especially in cases where what is said is being reported.
- 36.8. Provided that an employee gives talks on relatively isolated occasions, they shall, at the discretion of their Principal, Executive Principal or Chief Executive be permitted:

- *To retain any fee received (on the assumption that any preparatory work will have been undertaken in the employee's own time), or*
- *To be absent for the purpose of giving the talk, interview etc. without the necessity of taking annual leave, if the invitation entails being absent during working hours, providing the absence from work is reasonable and does not adversely impact on the delivery of education / their work.*

36.9. When an employee wishes to undertake paid lecturing on a regular basis additional to their employment with the Trust, they should follow the same procedure of that specified for undertaking additional work.

37. Smoking and Vaping

37.1. It is the policy of the Trust that all our workplace buildings are smoke free, and all employees have the right to work in a smoke-free environment. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in all enclosed areas and/or non-designated areas without exception. This includes common work areas, auditoriums, classrooms, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, elevators, hallways, cafeterias, staff rooms, stairs, restrooms, Trust-owned or leased vehicles and all other enclosed facilities. Failure to adhere to this instruction may result in disciplinary action being taken.

37.2. Definitions: Smoking refers to the use of traditional tobacco products. Vaping refers to the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems or electronic smoking devices. These are commonly called e- cigarettes, e-pipes, e-hookahs and e-cigars.

37.3. Further Advice and assistance will be given wherever practicable to employees who wish to adopt a healthier lifestyle and reduce their alcoholic intake. Requests for time off for counselling / attendance on courses will be considered on their merits, subject to the needs of the Trust.

38. Drug and Alcohol Misuse

38.1. It is the responsibility of all employees to report to work fit for duty without impairment from alcohol and/or illegal drugs.

38.2. It is a disciplinary offence for employees to consume alcohol and/or use illegal drugs during working hours or whilst on duty.

38.3. Any employee representing the Trust at official functions/meetings, whether within the working day or when attending evening seminars, meetings, etc. are reminded of the need to maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

- 38.4. Where there is a belief that an employee is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, their Manager will ensure that the employee is escorted home safely and make arrangements to interview them on the next working day.
- 38.5. Advice and assistance will be given wherever practicable to employees who wish to stop smoking. Requests for time off for counselling / attendance on courses will be considered on their merits, subject to the exigencies of the service.

39. Notification of Criminal Investigations and Other Required Disclosures

- 39.1. The Code of Conduct places a general obligation on all employees to disclose information that is relevant to their capability, capacity and suitability to carry out the duties and responsibilities for which they are employed. This general obligation applies irrespective of the role undertaken by the employee and is not limited to information that relates to a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning.
- 39.2. For employees undertaking roles for which a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required there is a specific obligation on them to disclose any convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings that they receive which are relevant to their employment.
- 39.3. For the avoidance of doubt an employee must immediately inform their Principal, Executive Principal or the Chief Executive, if during their employment with the Trust they are:
- *Included on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List*
 - *Disqualified from working with children under the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (See Annex H)*
 - *Advised that they are under investigation for a criminal act (including road traffic offences)*
 - *Arrested in connection with a criminal act*
 - *Notified that criminal charges are being considered against them*
 - *In receipt of a summons to appear before a Court of Law for an alleged offence*
 - *Found guilty and convicted of any offence*
 - *Receive a police caution*
 - *Are involved in any other matter which it would be reasonable to think would impact upon their role and or professional standing*
 - *Employees who are required to drive as part of their duties must also declare any penalties received in connection with motoring offences.*
- 39.4. Failure to disclose this information may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

- 39.5. The Principal / Executive Principal / Chief Executive will consider any possible effects of these matters on an individual's employment, discuss this with the People Team as appropriate and take relevant action.
- 39.6. After having undertaken a risk assessment and taking advice as appropriate, the manager will put in place precautionary measures for the protection of the employee, pupils/students and the Trust. Precautionary action may include restriction of duties, temporary redeployment, temporary change of work base or, if none of these options are practicable, suspension with pay. The Manager is responsible for consulting with authorised officers/legal/people team as appropriate and taking relevant action.
- 39.7. Following careful consideration of the available evidence, any action taken will be fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

40. Non-compliance with the Code of Conduct

- 40.1. Non-compliance with this Code will, in certain circumstances, result in disciplinary action being taken. Some breaches of the Code may be treated as gross misconduct and in such cases dismissal (which may be without notice) may be the appropriate form of disciplinary action. Gross misconduct may be defined as conduct or behaviour of such nature that the Trust is justified in no longer tolerating the employment of the staff member. Examples of gross misconduct which may lead to dismissal without previous warning include (list not exhaustive):
- Failure to disclose the correct information on an application form or disclosing misleading information on an application form
 - Wilful neglect, damage, destruction, unauthorised removal or sabotage of academy or Trust property
 - Dishonesty or falsification of records including expenses or pay claims
 - Theft and/or fraud
 - Intimidating behaviour or language, violence or threatened violence, dangerous behaviour, fighting/physical violence including corporal punishment
 - Inappropriate physical contact with colleagues or pupils and child abuse
 - Sexual offences, including (but not limited to) improper relationships with children
 - Improperly using one's position for personal gain
- 40.2. Lack of awareness of the Code of Contact will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance.

41. Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

- 41.1. In preparing or amending this policy, the author has given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; that is they have considered any potential impact on people who share certain protected characteristics. These protected characteristics are defined as: race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

