



EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

Policy Number

22a

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Ebor Academy Trust works closely with Trade Union Partners to develop and implement a fair and effective suite of people policies. Please seek advice from your trade union representative if you require support with this policy. If you are not a member of a trade union, please visit the Union tab or HR Self-service. Ebor Academy Trust welcomes Trade Unions to support staff throughout the processes associated with this policy. Equality data is collected and analysis is completed as part of the Trust's commitment to equity.

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Author:	David Wheeler
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Contents

1	Aims	2
2	Legislation and guidance	2
3	General obligations	3
4	Safeguarding	3
5	Sexual harassment	4
6	Staff-pupil relationships	4
7	Communication and social media	5
8	Acceptable use of technology	5
9	Confidentiality	6
10	Honesty and integrity	6
11	Dress code	7
12	Conduct outside of work	7

1 Aims

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure the Trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. Staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour at work.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards. These are considered good practice for all staff.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviour set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all adults to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. The term staff should be taken to include employed staff, contractors and volunteers present within the trust although non-employees will be referred to the relevant policy where action is out of the scope of this Code of Conduct and other Ebor people policies. Our values of Excellence, Belonging, Opportunity and Respect are the blueprint for professional relationships between people working within the Trust and its schools.

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

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

2 Legislation and guidance

We must have a policy on staff behaviour, as explained in the Department for Education's governance guide for academy trusts. This policy is non-contractual.

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should (among other things) cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing and [the public interest disclosure act](#) 1988, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media. Planned changes to KCSiE may require amendment to this policy prior to scheduled review in order to remain compliant (specifically KCSiE 2026 changes).

3 General obligations

Staff set an example for pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Not vape or smoke in work or take illegal substances or consume alcohol at or prior to attending work or take substances which may impact on judgement or behaviour at work.
- Do not use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils and others in line with the Ebor values of Excellence, Belonging, Opportunity, Respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal or political beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law or with the intention of influencing their own opinions or beliefs.
 - Examples of this include:
 - ☐ attempting to recruit or radicalise pupils;
 - ☐ promoting unlawful activity;
 - ☐ expressing discriminatory or extremist views to pupils;
 - ☐ using professional authority to pressure pupils;
 - ☐ undermining safeguarding;
- Be aware of the risks of sharing personal information and experiences with children
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Promote inclusivity and respect for individuality in the context of the wider community

4 Safeguarding

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

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

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are hosted on the Ebor website.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in our organisation (see section 1) has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children This includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

Allegations will be handled by the relevant Head Teacher, Executive Head or Director in collaboration with the Safeguarding Lead and HR Business Partner. Consideration will be given to redeployment, or suspension*, investigation and potential action as defined by the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. Where appropriate, the relevant external agencies will be consulted, as per the Trust's Safeguarding policy.

*suspension is a last resort and can only take place following the Trust's risk assessment and CEO sign-off processes. Suspension does not in itself amount to guilt or constitute disciplinary action.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

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

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

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

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it. Guidance and support are available from local DSL or Headteacher.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way. Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage and at the lowest possible level.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement to ensure that our staff and children are protected and supported to work together for the good of the Trust as a community.

4.3 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest". Examples linked to safeguarding include:

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

For our trust's detailed [whistle-blowing process](#), please click the link to the policy which is hosted on the Ebor Academy Trust website.

5 Sexual harassment

The Trust as an employer is obliged to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they've submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or to harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

Please refer to Ebor Academy Trusts Anti-sexual harassment policy which can be found on HR self-service.

6 Staff-pupil relationships

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

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a 1-to-1 basis, staff will make sure that:

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

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible. It is acknowledged that staff may live in the same communities as children in their school and a professional approach should be taken to manage the situation. The [teachers' standards \(part 2\)](#) can be used as a guideline for this.

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

While we are aware many pupils and their parents/carers may wish to give gifts to staff, e.g. at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not encouraged. In the context of an end of term 'thank you' or 'goodbye', reasonable gifts are not considered a breach of policy. Outside of this, gifts to children or gifts to staff which are frequent or excessive or suspected of being given in return for some advantage or as a form of leverage, will be considered inappropriate and will be subject to investigation.

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

7 Communication and social media

Staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. Staff are advised to lock down (or set to private) their social media accounts to minimise visibility. If staff have a personal profile on social media sites, they should consider not using their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate professional boundaries online and should be mindful that publicly available content may be viewed by pupils, parents/carers, colleagues and members of the public. Children within our primary schools are under the required age to sign up for most social and communication media accounts. Encouragement or engagement with children on unauthorised accounts (due to age) will be considered a breach of this policy.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents/carers via social media, or any other means outside of the trust, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents'/carers' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils within the trust without their parent, or carer's consent.

Where staff become aware that children or their relatives are actively pursuing them on social media, they should raise their concerns with the Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity.

8 Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology on site or belonging to the school/trust to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes but is not limited to dating and personal relationship applications, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content, including racists or extremist websites.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school/trust equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. Any personal use must be in the employee's own time (before or after working hours or during unpaid breaks). All personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in this Code. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

Use of personal devices for multifactor authentication or when on standby as a responder for exceptional events is permitted for these purposes only. A professional approach should be taken and [part 2 of the teachers' standards](#) should be used for guidance if necessary.

The Trust may monitor the use of its IT systems, networks, email and internet services where this is lawful, necessary and proportionate for legitimate purposes including safeguarding, information security, compliance, investigation of suspected misconduct and protection of Trust systems and information. Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the Trust's data protection, privacy and acceptable use policies. Staff should be aware of any previously viewed, open tabs which may update or download content on our systems while running in the background. Personal devices must not be left in locations where children can access them.

Personal use of Ebor devices, service contracts, airtime, mobile data etc. is not permitted without the specific permission of the Head Teacher or relevant Director.

Out of school activities including trips and 'residential' will have their own arrangements and agreed guidance. In the absence of this [part 2 of the teachers' standards](#) should be used as guidance.

In some cases specific lone or hazardous working arrangements will have a risk assessment which covers the use of personal or Trust technology.

9 Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the trust, its schools, staff, pupils and their parents/carers.

Staff must not disclose confidential information except where there is a legitimate work-related reason, where disclosure is authorised, where required or permitted by law, or where disclosure is made through appropriate safeguarding, whistleblowing, grievance, trade union or other recognised procedure. This does not overrule the duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm (see section 4).

Only authorised spokespersons may speak to the media on behalf of the Trust about matters relating to the Trust or any of its schools, pupils, staff or associated events and activities without the authority of the nominated press officer. All press and media queries should be directed to the Central Services Team for consideration and / or comment. There may be circumstances in which trade union representatives are also employees. In this case professional judgement is expected in any comments made to the press or media on behalf of their union. Union representatives are not authorised to comment on behalf of the Trust. This does not prevent employees from exercising their lawful rights, including their rights as trade union representatives or making protected disclosures in accordance with the law.

10 Honesty and integrity

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

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts from suppliers, external organisations or service providers (either current or potential) must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. Exceptions are made for gifts from children e.g. at the end of term or school year. However inappropriate gifts or those of disproportionately high value or from sources which may be a cause of concern (stolen or dangerous items) must be reported to the Head Teacher. Staff will be supported to protect their own integrity and professionalism in these situations.

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

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

Failure to do so could lead to an investigation and referral to the disciplinary policy. Where there are any updates to the information provided to the trust, the member of staff will advise the trust as soon as reasonably possible. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

11 Dress code

- Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner for the role and setting.
- Clothing and shoes must be safe and suitable for the activity and environment.
- Tattoos and clothing must not promote inappropriate messaging.
- Clothes will not display any advertisement or offensive or political slogans.
- Brand labels should be suitable for the environment Staff are expected to avoid logos, lettering and labels which are considered to be:
 - ☐ discriminatory;
 - ☐ threatening;
 - ☐ offensive;
 - ☐ sexually explicit;
 - ☐ unsafe;
 - ☐ incompatible with safeguarding;
 - ☐ inappropriate for the role;
 - ☐ likely to cause a legitimate and substantial concern.

12 Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Trust, school, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. The teachers' standards should be the reference point for professional and personal conduct in case of any doubt. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the Trust or school on social media. The Trust may consider conduct outside work where there is a sufficiently relevant connection to the employee's employment, including where the conduct affects safeguarding, the employee's suitability for their role, working relationships, the Trust's legitimate interests or public confidence in the Trust. Any action will be proportionate and consistent with employment law

Staff should consider the impact of their behaviour or their engagement with groups or activities and ensure that these do not compromise their professional reputation or that of the Trust, School, Pupils or fellow colleagues. Conduct of this nature will be referred to the Trust's disciplinary policy.

Trade union representatives are expected to comply with this Code when undertaking their normal duties as employees. Nothing in this Code is intended to restrict legitimate trade union activities or rights under legislation or the Trust's recognition agreement.