



**The Spencer  
Academies Trust**

**Employee and Volunteer Expectations  
and Code of Conduct – September  
2016**

## Introduction

This code applies to all Academies within The Spencer Academies Trust. The Directors may approve a transitional code for recently converted Academies in exceptional circumstances. The Scheme of Delegation for each Academy within the Trust outlines the delegated responsibility for staffing matters and the pay and conditions of all employees.

This document sets out the Trust and individual Academy's employee expectations and code of conduct and covers all employees and volunteers. Throughout the document reference to employees includes volunteers.

In this document references to Principal include the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Senior Leader responsible for each Academy, as appropriate, taking into account the management structure of the Academy.

The purpose is to:

- provide information about expectations for all employees in relation to standards of conduct
- enable employees to know and understand what is deemed acceptable
- provide advice and guidance about the Academy's expectations and an understanding that breaches of conduct may result in disciplinary action.

In accordance with the DFE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2016 this code has been adopted by the Academy in order for all employees to be fully aware of the standards of personal and professional conduct in relation to various aspects of their role. The code gives a clear framework for employees to understand their responsibilities and will be discussed during the course of their employment to ensure the code is mutually monitored, positively promoted and understood by everyone.

As part of their induction, every employee and volunteer will be asked to read, sign and date this code of conduct.

There is an expectation that all employees will conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with the highest standard in order to maintain public trust and confidence and be beyond reproach in the performance of their duties. Employees are also expected to behave in a fair, courteous and supportive manner to colleagues within the Academy and the wider Trust, and to operate within the Academy's policies and procedures. Physical violence, verbal abuse and swearing are totally unacceptable and not tolerated.

All employees are expected to obey the law relating to their work and general conduct. If they break the law outside of working time and the offence is one that could damage public confidence or have a direct effect on their work, the employee may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Employees must not undermine fundamental values, including those of democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Employees must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Academy and maintain high standards in their own conduct, performance, attendance and punctuality. Employees should ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law or breach the policies and procedures of the Academy, and always show respect for the rights of others.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. The conduct of all teachers must always be in line with the Teacher's Standards and where appropriate the Leadership Standards. Where employees are members of professional bodies, they must also comply with any standards of conduct which are set by that body.

Employees are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service. Where employees are aware of any contraventions of this Code, illegality, misconduct or breach of procedure they should notify the Principal or their line manager. Where the concern relates to their line manager it should be raised with the Principal or another senior leader. Where the concern relates to the Principal it should be raised with the CEO and if the concern relates to the CEO the concern should be raised with the Chair of the Trust Board.

Where the concerns are of suspected wrongdoing, malpractice, or dangers in relation to the Academy's activities concerning matters of public interest, employees should refer to the Academy's Whistleblowing Policy. Matters of a personal or more general concern would be covered by the Academy's Grievance or Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The Code does not seek to address every possible circumstance, and simply because a particular action may not be addressed within the Code, this does not condone that action by omission.

## **Safeguarding**

Employees must safeguard children's well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions, the local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures and the Academy's Policy for Child Protection to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children.

Employees must report immediately any safeguarding concerns relating to pupils to the designated safeguarding person and ensure the Principal is also informed. Where the concern relates to another employee they must report their concerns to the Principal immediately. If a child reports any safeguarding concerns to any employees, this must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead. Employees must personally report to the police cases where they discover an act of female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out. Employees must not promise confidentiality to a child and always ensure that any actions they take are in the interests of a child. All employees have a responsibility to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed.

All employees must be fully aware of the Academy policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and given their position of trust, must ensure that they do not put themselves in any situation where their conduct or behaviour with any pupil could be misconstrued.

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

See Policy for Child Protection to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children.

## **Relationships and contact between Academy employees - the public, parents and pupils**

Personal contact other than in certain exempted circumstances between employees and current/former pupils of Academy age outside the normal Academy work environment are not permitted. Any proposed work related contact, outside of the normal working environment, must be agreed in advance by the Principal and be recorded and monitored. Unexpected contact with pupils should be kept to a minimum, for example a brief greeting. Any transport of pupils must be agreed in line with the Academy policy and always agreed with the Principal or their appointed representative and the person having parental responsibility.

Correspondence received by an employee from former pupils, the public or parents should always be discussed with their line manager/Principal and filed with any response in the appropriate Academy records system.

Employees should be extremely cautious when using social networking sites outside of work and avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any material, including comments or images that could damage their professional reputation and/or bring the Academy into disrepute. Where employees do use social networking sites profiles must be set as 'private' and under no circumstances should employees allow access to pupils, their families and or carers.

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

Where former pupils who are under the age of 18 and still in receipt of education in whatever educational setting make contact the employees must refer to the 'Contact between Employees and Pupils outside the work context' and discuss their response to any such significant contact with their current line manager/Principal.

See Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings – October 2015

## **Standards of Dress**

It is expected that all employees will dress in a way that clearly reflects and is reciprocal of the standards of the Academy within its community and the wider Trust. All employees must have regard for health, safety and welfare and need to convey a sense of professionalism, authority and purpose.

All students are expected to dress to a high standard at all times and the same is therefore expected of all employees. The Academy requires its employees to dress in a manner that creates a good impression both at work in the Academy and outside of the Academy whilst on Academy business. Clothes should provide sufficient cover so as not to be offensive.

The purpose of the dress code is to establish basic guidelines on appropriate clothing and appearance at our Academy, so that we:

- promote a positive, professional image;
- where possible, respect religious, racial and gender-specific clothing requirements and those of staff with disabilities;
- take account of health and safety requirements; and
- help staff decide what clothing is appropriate for work.

Different departments may have specific requirements that result in particular clothing demands, for example, because their work raises health and safety risks. It is important that all staff dress in a manner appropriate to their working environment and the type of work they do but this must be within the context of the overarching standards of dress.

We expect staff to take a common sense approach to the dress code. Any enquiries regarding the operation of our dress code (including whether an article of clothing is suitable to wear to work) should be made to your line manager in the first instance.

Work wear for all employees should be that which would be appropriate within the working environment whilst maintaining a professional image. This can be that male employees wear a shirt, tie, jacket/jumper, and trousers and that female employees wear a dress, trousers or skirt, top, cardigan or jacket.

Staff should not wear casual, gym (unless required for teaching a PE lesson) or beachwear to work. This includes track suits, sweat-shirts, casual or sports t-shirts or shorts, combat trousers, jogging bottoms, jeans or leggings. Tops should not carry wording or pictures that might be offensive or cause damage to our reputation. It is inappropriate to wear clothing such as cut-off shorts, crop tops, see through material or clothes that expose areas of the body normally covered at work.

Footwear should be appropriate to a busy environment. Trainers are not acceptable for every day wear apart from those employees delivering PE. Flip flops or flimsy sandals are not deemed suitable on health and safety grounds

Employees should have no facial or body piercing, apart from one or two earrings in each ear, and employees are expected to conform to this convention while at the Academy or on Academy business. Any tattoos should be hidden from view while employees are working at the Academy. Employees should have hairstyles, hair colour, jewellery and make-up in keeping with a professional image.

Employees may wear religious and cultural dress including clerical collars, head scarves, skullcaps or a turban unless it breaches this code or compromises the health and safety of the wearer any other person.

It is important that employees appear clean and smart at all times when at work, particularly when they may be in contact with pupils, parents or the general public.

On INSET days, and during school holidays for employees who work during these periods, the dress code is more casual.

Employees must wear their ID badges at all times.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their teams observe the standards set by this dress code.

## **Equality issues**

Employees must adhere to equality policies in relation to employment and their duties and responsibilities. The Academy is committed to equality of opportunity and will not tolerate any harassment, intimidation, unfair discrimination or victimisation, by employees. Employees must not be discriminatory with regards to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

See the Trust Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

## **Health and safety**

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

Employees have a responsibility to inform the Principal or their line manager of any medical condition/illness they have during the course of their employment which may impact on their fitness to undertake their duties or on the health and safety of themselves, pupils, other employees, volunteers or governors. Reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented as appropriate.

See Health and Safety Policy

## **Disclosure of information and Confidentiality**

Employees must not disclose information given to them in confidence without consent except for that relating to safeguarding of a child which must be passed on. Advice should always be sought from the data controller for the Spencer Academies Trust on the appropriate use of data and disclosure of Academy information. Any actions taken by the Academy must always be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Academy employees should not use confidential information obtained in the course of their employment with the Academy for personal use, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it for unauthorised purposes.

Employees and governors should also be mindful that requirements in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of pupils, their families, colleagues and any matters relating to the Academy itself apply to all forms of communication, including social networking sites.

## **Use of Equipment:**

If there is a requirement in the employee's role to take photographs of children for Academy purposes this must be carried out using Academy equipment that will be provided and with the agreement of the Principal and in line with the agreed Academy procedures.

Employees may be issued with a laptop and passwords to access the Academy Intranet and Internet. Employees are responsible for the use of the laptop while in their possession and should therefore be careful about who has access to their password and personal machine.

Other equipment – Any items belonging to the Academy must remain available to be used by employees and students as necessary. Employees will be responsible for the safe keeping of equipment loaned to them by the Academy.

On leaving the Academy employees must return all property belonging to the Academy in good condition.

Employees should not normally access their mobile phones or other personal devices during lessons and should not make or receive calls at any time that they are supervising students, unless in an emergency situation. Support staff are expected to adhere to these principles during normal working hours.

Any personal devices must only be used in lessons in order to enhance learning in that lesson.

### **Use of Academy premises or facilities for work not connected with the Academy**

Employees must not use the Academy's premises or facilities for activities which are not connected with their employment at the Academy, without agreement from the Principal. This includes the personal use of the Academy email, telephones, computers, photocopiers, or other equipment.

Internal email systems and Academy computer equipment should always be used in accordance with the appropriate Academy policies.

### **Employees, volunteers or governors facing criminal charges**

Anyone who during the course of their employment with the Academy faces criminal charges or who receives a new reprimand, caution or conviction must inform their line manager and the Principal.

### **Conflict of interest**

Employees should declare any personal interest that could bring about conflict with the Academy's interests. Academy employees must declare to their Principal any financial interests or non-financial interests which could or could be perceived to conflict with their role within the Academy.

Employees are required not to take outside employment which conflicts with the Academy's interests; any employees intending to work for outside organisations should seek permission from the Principal.

### **Acceptance of gifts**

It is reasonable for employees to accept modest gifts. The giving of gifts should be in line with the agreed Academy policy.

### **Time Keeping and Attendance**

Punctuality is key to running a successful educational establishment and students and employees are expected to attend all lessons on time and to remain on-site throughout a normal working day. Employees should be ready to receive students at the scheduled start time for sessions as well as making sure students are not dismissed before the appropriate end of session time. Likewise support staff are expected to attend work on time and be ready to start work at their normal start time, as agreed with their line manager, and should not leave early without prior permission from their line manager. A full time working week is based on 37 hours, pro rata for part time, and the actual working pattern is as agreed with the employee's line manager.

For employees who work during the school holiday periods their working hours of work remain the same but there can be flexibility on start and finish times as agreed with their line manager.

## **Honesty and Integrity**

All employees must:

- maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work, this includes the handling and claiming of money, following correct procedures in all financial matters and the use of Academy property and facilities (Please refer to the Finance Policy).
- complete any documentation and forms honestly, without damage, alteration or falsification. Employees should never conceal any matter that should be reported.
- ensure that money, property and other funds belonging to either the Academy or to others are properly used and protected from misappropriation.
- report to their line manager or the Chief Finance Officer, if they suspect any financial irregularities have occurred and to co-operate fully with any subsequent investigations.
- ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit them or the Academy or which might compromise the mutual trust and confidence that exists between the two.
- ensure that they do not use their official position or information acquired in the course of their duties to further their private interests or those of others.
- serve the Academy faithfully in the performance of their duties and not act unreasonably against the interests of the Academy.
- ensure that all communications from the media regarding Academy business is directed to the Principal.

## **Conduct Outside Work**

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

Employees should be careful to ensure that nothing they say or do brings the Trust or individual Academy or its name into disrepute. Offensive comments that are defamatory, discriminatory or falsely stated in our communities or on social networking sites can damage a reputation that has taken a considerable amount of time to establish.

Criminal offences that involve violence, possession or misuse of drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and may constitute gross misconduct.

## **Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs**

Alcohol may not be consumed during working hours.

The Academy operates a no smoking policy. Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes are prohibited on the Academy/Trust premises or grounds. This applies to all Academy buildings and those where Academy/Trust services are provided.

It is expected that employees will attend for work in a fit state to carry out their duties. Employees found under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be deemed to be unfit and an investigation under the Academy's Disciplinary Policy will follow. Employees must be conscious of the Academy's drug policy when discussing such issues, particularly the use of illegal substances, with students.

See Alcohol & Drugs Policy.

### **Private Vehicles**

Employees registration numbers are held on the database and it is important that employees inform Reception if their number changes.

All employees who are attending courses or meetings on behalf of the Academy or as part of their professional development must ensure that they have the appropriate insurance in place. Employees must, in addition, check that their insurance covers them taking a student in their car and where appropriate carrying Academy equipment.

### **Communications with other employees**

All employees are entitled to feel safe and secure at work and be free from intimidation or bullying behaviour. Employees are therefore expected to show professional courtesy and respect at all times to others working within the Academy. Should an employee feel that this has not been the case they should raise the matter with their line manager or in the case where this involves the line manager with a member of the leadership team or the HR contact.

### **Parental Contact**

The Academy has an expectation that employees will act swiftly and professionally at all times. This is particularly important where parents have contacted the Academy with a concern or complaint relating to the education of their child. The aim at the Academy is to make a return call on the same day as the original contact was made, even if in the first instance this is just a holding call.

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

### **Communication and Team Work**

Team work is critical to the successful working culture at the Academy. Every employee is responsible for promoting and creating the culture of team work. It is also the responsibility of team leaders and senior leadership teams to develop and promote team work through on-going communication and team building.

It is as much for the employee to seek information as it is for the Academy to provide information.



Employees should carry out their duties, as agreed with their line manager and as detailed in their job description, conscientiously, safely and in line with Academy policies and procedures. Employees should also comply with reasonable management requests and perform the full range of duties required in relation to their job to the required standard.

All forms of bullying, including violence or verbal aggression towards colleagues are unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the Academy. It is not acceptable for employees to abuse their position with the Academy or to take advantage of other employees. If there are important issues that cannot resolve amicably with another employee, the situation must be brought to the attention of the line manager or other senior leader.

## **Well Being**

The wellbeing of employees is central to providing a dynamic Academy and the ongoing raising of standards. Employees will enjoy coming to work in a caring and supportive workplace, when and where difficulties and challenges are resolved in a positive manner by all people.

The Trust, Governors, Principal and Senior Leadership Team will do their best to support employees within the context of a positive professional working environment.

## **Breaches of the Employee Expectations and Code of Conduct**

The Academy's Disciplinary Policy may be applied to breaches of this code up to and including dismissal. If an investigation is initiated resulting from an alleged breach of this code, employees may be accompanied by a companion who may be a colleague or a trade union representative.

All employees should report to their line manager or an appropriate senior manager any breaches or suspected breaches of this code.

## **Focus on Learning (whether in a teaching or support role)**

Following appropriate training employees are expected to follow the Teacher or other appropriate Standards, Trust Pay Policy and in particular to:

- Plan for lessons using the relevant attainment targets appropriate for each class
- Prepare for all ability levels within the group indicating what all / most / some students should be able to achieve indicating the levels / grades associated with each activity
- Plan accelerated learning cycle whereby each lesson connects the learning, activates, demonstrates and consolidates
- Use a variety of teaching and learning strategies and multiple intelligences appropriate to the learning objectives
- Use data to inform teaching as well as to motivate students
- Use new technologies to increase enjoyment and speed up the rate of learning
- Use constructive assessment and marking for improvement

Employees are expected to plan collaboratively develop on – line lessons, share resources and good practice as high performing teams. There is an expectation that teachers will use language of metacognitive learning.

## **Supporting Local Governing Bodies in the promotion of the Academy's ethos and culture which:**

- Values self-governance and independence
- Puts students education, health and safety first
- Avoids action which disrupts the learning of students. Strike action is a breach of contract and Governors consider it to be contrary to the ethos and culture of the Academy.
- Treats individuals as professional, hard-working employees who make whatever contribution is necessary to achieve our goals
- Requires employees to be flexible and adaptable in response to changing Academy days including early mornings or evenings.

## **Excellence and innovation**

The Trust/Academy strives for excellence and high quality, doing the right things right first time. We promote a culture of innovation and teamwork, encouraging and supporting employees to pilot new ideas with their classes or to suggest improvements in current practices. We welcome employees who are up to date and innovative in their use of new technologies to improve the rate of learning for students. The Trust, Governors, Principal and Senior Leaders welcome new ideas from colleagues from any source nationally and internationally.

## **Supervision and contribution to the wider aspects of Academy life**

Teachers and classroom based support staff are, where appropriate, expected to take part in the supervision of students at break times, before and after Academy hours. We welcome contribution from new employees to the lunchtime supervision rota.

Education is more than timetabled lessons. At the Academy we have a wide range of extra – curricular activities, competitions, house matches, inter sports, etc. which take place at lunch times, after Academy hours, at weekends and outside the Academy terms. We appoint employees who are prepared to support and/or lead activities within our programme to continue to provide students with new opportunities and experiences.

## **Links with other Policies and guidance documents:**

The Academy is committed to good behaviour, standards and discipline. To help achieve this objective there is a clear network of systems and procedures in place for the prevention and investigation of misconduct. This code should be read in conjunction with the following Academy policies and guidance:

- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Financial Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Alcohol and Drugs Policy
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings
- Policy for Child Protection to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

All employees employed by The Spencer Academies Trust are required to now sign the declaration below:

I (Print Name) ..... confirm I have read and understood the document 'Employee and Volunteer Expectations and Code of Conduct – September 2016' and am familiar with the documents and policies referred to therein.

Signed: .....

Date: .....