



**Aspirational Aims & Code of Conduct for employees, volunteers**

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Document Owner:	Human Resources
Version:	V2
Date of last review:	May 2019
Category:	Trust Policy

## **Aspirational Aims**

The Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as the Trust), aims to provide an outstanding education to every child.

At the Trust everyone matters, and to reflect this culture we ask that staff aspire to;

- promote an educational community based on love and inclusivity, providing a beacon of hope where all can flourish
- ensure that our schools are centres of excellence with a focus on the nurture and achievement of all their members
- promote mutual support, encouragement and benefit between all our schools
- develop a future and inspire aspirational thinking based on our educational heritage and to make use of the latest research in teaching and learning and child development
- recognise that, each child is a unique human being, worth the highest possible standards of education and care and the closest attention to what will enable them to flourish
- recognise and enable those who often remain invisible, through ethnic or cultural disadvantage, or through disability or poverty
- and in Church schools to foster, maintain and celebrate Christian distinctiveness in our schools

All staff, before appointment, are given every opportunity to investigate the Trust/School and come to a decision as to whether the environment is right for them. Once appointed, the Trust expects that all staff will promote the values which permeate the vision of the Trust.

# **Code of Conduct**

## **1. Purpose & Scope**

1.1 The purpose of the Code of Conduct, is to provide a clear framework within which employees and volunteers of the Trust are expected to conduct themselves. It covers some of the most important issues relating to personal conduct, but it is not intended to be exhaustive. The Trust strives to maintain a work environment for its employees and volunteers and a learning environment for its pupils in which honesty, integrity and respect for fellow staff and pupils are constantly reflected in personal behaviour and standards of conduct. From herein, both employees and volunteers will be referred to as 'Staff' unless stated otherwise.

1.2 A staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct) is in addition a requirement of the statutory DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (as amended). It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to the work places them in a position of trust. A Code of Conduct provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities in the Trust. Teaching staff should use this in conjunction with the Teachers' Standards document. Where a school handbook for staff exists, Headteachers should ensure that where a Staff Handbook exists, it reflects the content of this policy.

1.3 The Code of Conduct should also be read in conjunction with further reading and associated policies listed at the end including the seven principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

2.1 Line managers are responsible for:

2.1.1 Managing the conduct of staff in accordance with the Code of Conduct and where applicable the disciplinary procedure; and

2.1.2 Ensuring that staff are aware of the expected standards of conduct, in the case of employees the disciplinary rules and procedure and any of the local policies and procedures specific to their job or area.

2.2 Employees are responsible for:

2.2.1 Familiarising themselves with the Code of Conduct, which is intended to be supportive and explanatory, and if in doubt, speak to their manager for further guidance.

2.2.2 Further guidance for employees on what the Trust considers misconduct/gross misconduct is set out in the Disciplinary Procedure. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and with the associated Trust or school level policies may result in disciplinary action being taken against employees where breaches warrant such action.

2.2.3 Employees should be familiar with the Conditions of Service under which they are employed. A contract is signed by all employees and individuals are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the specific requirements for their post and that actions within their personal lives do not bring the school or Trust into disrepute.

2.3 Staff are responsible for:

2.3.1 Keeping themselves up to date with the contents of the Code of Conduct, as

amended, and promoting learning and setting examples.

### **3. Safeguarding**

3.1 The welfare of the child is paramount.

3.2 All staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of pupils clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

3.3 All staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

3.4 All staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.

3.5 Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their manager if they think they may have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.

3.6 All staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, marital status, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.

3.7 All employees should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

3.8 All employees have a responsibility to keep pupils safe and to protect them from abuse (Physical, Emotional, Neglect and Sexual) and to report any safeguarding concerns in line with training provided. Pupils have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

3.9 The safeguarding culture of individual schools and of the Trust as a whole is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

3.10 Staff should be aware of and understand the Safeguarding Policy, the procedures for managing allegations against staff and the whistle blowing procedures. All policies are available on the Trust's website and are provided to staff during induction.

3.11 Staff are expected to inform their manager where their relationships and associations, both within and outside of the workplace (including online), may have implications for the safeguarding of children in the school or Trust. Staff should not disclose personal information to parents or pupils.

### **4. Treating Other People with Dignity and Respect**

4.1 All staff are expected to treat pupils, other colleagues, parents and external contacts with dignity and respect and to comply with all relevant Trust policies, procedures and guides. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation

will not be tolerated in the Trust. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and parents. All staff are expected to build relationships which are rooted in mutual respect and at all times, observe proper boundaries appropriate to a staff member's professional position.

4.2 All staff are expected to ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' and colleagues' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

4.3 In terms of the pupils, staff are, when admonishing, expected to differentiate between the unacceptable actions of the child and the child itself, treating all pupils as individuals and with respect.

4.4 Staff should never humiliate a child either privately or publicly. Sarcasm, over familiar or inappropriate language should not be used.

4.5 All staff should be referred to using their title. (For example, Mr or Sir, Miss, Ms or Mrs when using a surname). Staff should be friendly and welcoming, helpful, polite and courteous to everyone connected with the school: parents, other staff and pupils etc. Where it has been a custom and practice that first names are used, this can continue at the discretion of the Head. Consideration can be given to nursery aged children.

4.6 All language which could constitute or be construed as of a sexual nature and outside of the school curriculum policy should be avoided.

4.7 Meetings with staff, parents or pupils should not, where possible, be held in closed, locked areas or any location without external visibility. If appropriate or practical, meetings should be held in an open area and another member of staff should also be present. Comment – it is not always possible to be with someone else.

4.8 Staff are expected to display appropriate personal standards of behaviour i.e. respecting colleagues and management and communicating and interacting in an appropriate manner with colleagues and management, alongside representing the Trust and the school in a positive way.

4.9 Where staff have children in a Trust school, they should observe normal parent/school protocols. Boundaries must be exercised in relation to the member of staff and the school. Staff who are parents must not undermine colleagues with unprofessional practice.

## **5. Communications, Social Media and Networking Policy**

5.1 The Trust uses a variety of methods to communicate with its employees, pupils, volunteers, agency staff, parents and the community and to deliver services. Communications using Trust facilities may be intercepted, recorded and monitored for business use and where appropriate for the detection and prevention of crime. This includes, but is not limited to, telephone calls, internet use, e mail and post.

5.2 Staff must adhere to the Trust's Social Media and Networking Policy which applies to social networking sites, personal web pages, personal space provided by internet providers and internet presences which make available personal information (including images) and opinions to the general public including but not limited to Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, MSN, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, forums, bulletin boards, chatrooms, multiplayer on-line gaming, virtual worlds and instant messenger. This includes contact with ex-pupils under the age of 18.

5.3 Staff should also follow the policy regarding the Use of Mobile Devices, mobile devices should not be used in any area where children are present. Use of mobile devices should be limited to non-contact time and only in designated areas where children are not present.

## **6. Health & Safety at Work**

6.1 Under the provisions contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Trust undertakes to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of all staff. It is the duty of all staff to:

6.1.1 take reasonable care of themselves and others at work;

6.1.2 co-operate with the Trust, as far as it is necessary, to enable them to carry out their legal duties;

6.1.3 not intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided, including personal protective equipment, for health, safety or welfare at work; and

6.1.4 staff should be aware of the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act as described in the Trust and school Health & Safety Policies. Staff need to ensure that they are up to date on these obligations. Copies of relevant information can be obtained on request.

## **7. Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking**

7.1 Smoking or vaping on Trust sites is prohibited. Also, in consideration of children and adults accessing schools, it is requested that smoking or vaping outside the premises is not directly outside school gates.

7.2 The use, possession or distribution or sale of drugs is totally prohibited. Staff in possession of illegal drugs or using illegal drugs whilst at work will be reported to the police and, in the case of employee's subject to disciplinary action, this may result in dismissal

7.3 Staff are prohibited from working whilst under the influence of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol. Employees who suspect a colleague of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at work must report this to their manager or a more senior manager if it is their manager under suspicion.

7.4 Staff must bring to the attention of their manager any medication or illness which may affect their work performance or behaviour

## **8. Declaration of interests**

8.1 By declaring interests, staff help maintain public confidence, avoid any suspicion of impropriety and protect themselves against allegations of wrongdoing. Any staff who are in a position to influence decisions which are taken by or on behalf of the Trust and have any interest in that decision must declare it.

8.2 Staff should carry out duties and responsibilities at all times with honesty and integrity. Authority or positions should never be used for personal gain or to enable colleagues or others to gain personally. Staff must declare if they are aware of any connections with any business or organisation that supply the Trust/school.

## **9. Finances and the use of Trust/school and other public resources**

9.1 Trust equipment is to be treated with due care and respect. If staff wish to borrow equipment for personal use they must first gain permission from the manager to whose department the equipment is inventoried. Any Trust/school procedures for signing equipment in and out must be followed.

9.2 Equipment taken out of school/off site which has not been authorised and is subsequently lost or broken must be replaced at the borrower's own expense. Breakages should always be reported immediately to the inventory holder. Loaned equipment should be kept securely and not left in vehicles unattended.

9.3 Staff must declare and pay for any private telephone, photocopying, faxing and postage made using Trust resources.

9.4 While the Trust accepts that staff may access the internet for personal reasons, using the school system should not take place during work time. During non-contact time, before or after school etc the school system may be used but all staff should be aware that access to sites will be monitored and no site is to be accessed that would be considered inappropriate. Staff are asked to seek guidance from their manager if in any doubt about the appropriateness of accessing a particular site.

## **10. Additional Work**

10.1 It is not the intention of the Trust to prevent employee's from undertaking additional employment unless that employment conflicts with or detrimentally affects the Trust's interests.

10.2 Permission should be obtained from the manager to undertake additional employment. The Trust expects all staff to fulfil their obligations to the pupils and reserves the right to make a judgment as to whether undertaking additional work would be prejudicial to that outcome or bring the school into disrepute. A discussion with the manager before seeking additional employment should always precede the attempt to find an additional job/post. If on appointment a member of staff already has a further post, this should be declared at the interview.

10.3 The Trust recognises that every individual has a right to seek alternative employment. Since the school will generally be asked for a reference, it is both courteous and sensible to inform Managers should be informed in advance of a reference is being sought.

## **11. Gifts & Hospitality**

11.1 Advice should be sought from the manager/headteacher on any matter regarding the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. However, it is acknowledged that school staff may be in an unusual situation whereby, owing to a long-standing tradition, pupils often give presents to their teacher/support staff at certain times of the year. For all staff, all gifts with a value of more than £50 individual/£100 collective whether accepted or refused, must be recorded on the Trust's Hospitality & Gift Register. All staff should not accept gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although items of small value such as pens, or business diaries may be accepted. Specific guidance regarding gifts, hospitality and entertainment is set out in Appendices 1 & 2.

## **12. Copyright**

12.1 Staff should be aware that "intellectual copyright"; for example, textbooks written by staff, can, in some circumstances be claimed by the Trust and clarification of the Trust's position should be sought before sharing documents externally.

### **13. Disclosure of Information, Confidentiality & Data Protection**

13.1 Staff are required to take their duty of confidentiality seriously and through induction and training be familiar with the requirements of the Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the school/Trust Data Protection Policies. This includes matters that are verbally discussed and not just written.

13.2 Staff must not transfer confidential information to their private e mail address without the prior knowledge or consent of their manager.

13.3 Staff have a responsibility to ensure that electronic and paper data and information is kept secure at all times. Staff are encouraged not to take personal data on staff or pupils out of school /off site unless there is no other alternative. Where paper files are taken out from a central system, staff must log the location of the file creating an audit trail. Confidential information should not:

- Be left unattended if being taken between home and work or between work places;
- Be taken to entertainment or public places, such as restaurants;
- Be discussed where there is a possibility of being overheard.

### **14. Work Colleague and Personal Relationships**

14.1 Personal relationships (i.e. family or close personal friends) between people in the same team or between a manager and one of their team are potentially problematic and should be avoided where possible or managed appropriately where it cannot be avoided.

14.2 Relatives, spouses, partners or close personal friends are not allowed to be involved in the processes and decisions relating to employment issues, including but not limited to: appointment, performance; determining pay or conditions of employment, providing references on behalf of the Trust.

### **15. Appearance Standard**

15.1 Standards appropriate to the effective delivery of education are necessary at all times. The Trust imposes a particular style of dress only where protective clothing and uniforms are required.

15.2 All staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. All staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

### **16. Reporting Responsibility**

16.1 A member of staff must notify their manager of any criminal charges or convictions whilst they are in the employment of the Trust. The Headteacher should seek advice and guidance from the HR team on the action to take when a member of staff discloses a criminal charge or conviction. Criminal charges or convictions may constitute unprofessional conduct and a potential breakdown in the bond of trust necessary between employer and employee. In such cases, employees may be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal which may be appropriate.

16.2 Each reported case will be considered independently. It is likely that any conviction for possession of prohibited drugs, sexual misconduct, theft, misappropriation of school/Trust funds or equipment, violent conduct, disorderly conduct in a public place etc



will be deemed as gross misconduct and therefore may result in disciplinary action including dismissal where appropriate. appropriate

## **17. Making Professional Judgements**

17.1 This Code of Conduct cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of a pupil which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge and, in doing so, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with a manager.

18.2 Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

## **18. Contact with the Media**

18.1 Staff are not allowed to discuss Trust matters with the press or public or disclose (unless they are clearly likely to be uncontroversial) information or documents on Trust business. Staff must not speak, write or give interviews to the media and, if approached by the media, should refer the enquiry to their manager/headteacher.

## **19. Communication of the Code of Conduct**

19.1 This should be provided for all staff (either electronically or by providing a paper copy) to read at the start of their employment with the Trust. All staff should be given an opportunity to discuss it with a member of the management and ask any questions in order to clarify understanding within their induction before signing to confirm that they have read and understood it on the induction checklist.

19.2 All members of staff at all levels are to bring to the notice of their immediate manager any matter, whether personal or professional, which may be in conflict with either the letter or spirit of the Code of Conduct. This may take place on an 'in confidence' basis except where there is a statutory duty to report.

### **Further reading & associated policies:**

[www.saferecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Oct%202015.pdf](http://www.saferecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Oct%202015.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE guidance as amended)

Disciplinary Procedure

Health & Safety at Work Policy

Teachers Standards

Whistleblowing Policy

Social Media & Networking Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Policies

ICT Policy for Acceptable use (in development)

Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff

Safeguarding Policy

The Nolan Principles (7 principles of Public Life)

# Appendix 1

## Specific Guidance regarding Gifts, Hospitality & Entertainment –

### What is a gift, hospitality or entertainment?

This includes a gift, hospitality or entertainment, monetary or otherwise and not limited to:

- goods and other items;
- services
- attendance at cultural sporting and other events
- meals, drinks and other hospitality and
- accommodation

Some exceptions do exist, such as items provided at conferences that are provided to all delegates.

The following applies if you are offered gifts, hospitality or entertainment:

#### 1. Accept, reject or return the gift and hospitality

As a general principle hospitality or entertainment of any sort should not be accepted and that you should not accept significant personal gifts as defined in paragraph 11.

- a) Entertainment – e.g. sports events, theatre tickets – should not be accepted and any exceptions are likely to be rare and will require prior approval by manager/headteacher.
- b) Hospitality – the Trust allows for modest hospitality. Where hospitality is accepted this should wherever possible be approved in advance and recorded in the Register of Gifts, Hospitality, and Entertainment.
- c) Gifts – gifts should not be accepted except where it is recognised that it is common for parents/carers/pupils to give gifts to school staff as a sign of appreciation. Items of value considered for the purposes of the guidance to be of less than £50 individual/£100 collective estimated retail value, may be accepted and do not need to be recorded in the Register.
- d) Collective gifts presented by colleagues can occur when a person is unwell, reaches a particular milestone, or is leaving the Trust. In such circumstances the retail value of a gift may exceed the limits defined in this guidance but must be recorded in the Hospitality & Gift Register as a collective gift.

Exceptionally, if returning a gift would cause offence, your manager can arrange for it to be received by the Trust and passed on to be used for fundraising.

#### 2. Record the item within the Register of Gifts, Hospitality and Entertainment

The Trust will keep a register of gifts, hospitality and entertainment offered dependent on the values set out above. A pro forma or record of all the required information in an e mail, see Appendix 2 should be submitted to the HR Director.

## Appendix 2

### Code of Conduct – Record for Register of Gifts, Hospitality & Entertainment

Employee name:

Job Title

Name of business/person offering gift/hospitality/entertainment.....

Gift/hospitality offered	
Reason for the offer where known	
Offered by	
Reason for refusal	
Date of offer	
Was the gift/hospitality accepted or refused?	
Business reason for acceptance	
Estimated Value	

Line Manager signature .....

Date .....

Please return to the HR Director, Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust, The Old Deanery, Cathedral Green, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2UG