



VALLEY INVICTA ACADEMIES TRUST

Staff Code of Conduct

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Staff Code of Conduct

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Staff Code of Conduct

1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our Trust schools are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

All Trust staff have an influential position in our schools, and will act as role models for pupils/students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

Rules of conduct

While working for the Trust you should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular, you should:

- observe the terms and conditions of your contract;
- observe all our policies, procedures and regulations which are included in this Staff Handbook or notified to you from time to time by means of notice boards, e-mail, the intranet or otherwise;
- take reasonable care in respect of the health and safety of colleagues and third parties;
- comply with all reasonable instructions given by managers; and
- act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of the Trust, its pupils/students and staff.

Failure to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct may result in action being taken under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is a serious breach of contract and includes misconduct which, in our opinion, is likely to prejudice our business or reputation or irreparably damage the working relationship and trust between employer and employee. Gross misconduct will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure and will normally lead to dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).

The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Dishonesty;
- Theft or fraud;
- Physical violence or bullying or threatened violence;
- Deliberate and serious damage to property;
- Serious misuse of our property or name;
- Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- Repeated or serious failure to obey instructions, or any other serious act of insubordination;
- Inappropriate relationships with pupils/students;
- Unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;

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- Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances during working hours;
- Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- Breach of health and safety rules;
- Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in your possession is kept secure;
- Acceptance of bribes or other secret payments;
- Conviction for a criminal offence that in our opinion may affect our reputation or our relationships with our staff, pupils/students, parents/carers or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to continue to work for us;
- Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;
- Serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of your contract or operating procedures;
- Knowing breach of statutory rules affecting your work;
- Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to our Data Protection Policy;
- Harassment of, or discrimination against, employees, contractors, clients or members of the public, related to gender, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion or belief or age contrary to our Equal Opportunities Policy or our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy;
- Refusal to disclose any of the information required by your employment or any other information that may have a bearing on the performance of your duties;
- Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefits;
- Knowingly taking parental (including shared parental), paternity or adoption leave when not eligible to do so or for a purpose other than supporting a child;
- Making a disclosure of false or misleading information under our Whistleblowing Policy maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith;
- Making untrue allegations in bad faith against a colleague;
- Serious misuse of our information technology systems (including misuse of developed or licensed software, use of unauthorised software and misuse of e-mail and the internet) contrary to our Electronic Information and Communications Systems Policy;
- Undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment during your working hours;

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 school and its pupils.

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2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils/students. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality;
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school while conducting Trust business;
- Treat pupils/students and others with dignity and 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;
- Express personal beliefs in a way that will not overly influence pupils/students, and will not exploit pupils'/students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within;

4. Safeguarding

All staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.

All staff, including Trustees, Governors and Visitors, will familiarise themselves with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. In addition, identified staff and governors will familiarise themselves with the Prevent initiative.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures are available at our schools and on our websites. New staff will also be given copies as part of their induction.

Staff should also be aware of the [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings \(February 2022\)](#), [Safer Recruitment Consortium](#).

5. Staff/pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils/students 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/students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access;

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- Others can see in to the room;
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Staff should avoid contact with pupils/students outside school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils/students. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils/students and their parents/carers may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils/students are not acceptable. You can also refer to the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil/students may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager or the Headteacher.

6. School Trips and Events

This staff code of conduct applies on all school trips and school events. Staff have a duty to ensure their behaviour remains professional at all times.

- School staff will not consume or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol or smoke while on duty on a school trip, at a school event or on school premises.
- Alcohol may be consumed responsibly on the school premises or at a school event when the Headteacher has given express permission, such as during a trip, an evening or weekend social function or a celebration event. Staff should liaise with the Headteacher in advance of an event.

7. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be made available to pupils/students.

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

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils/students at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the school's Online Safety Policy and Social Media Policy.

8. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

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Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils/students. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils/students.

Smart watches are allowed to be worn but must be switched to aeroplane mode during school hours.

We reserve the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

9. Confidentiality

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

This information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority;
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others;
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for;

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.

10. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils/students, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25 must be declared and recorded on the school gifts and hospitality register.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications and professional experience is correct.

11. Dress code

We encourage everyone to maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance at work and to conduct themselves in a professional manner. The purpose of our dress code is to establish basic guidelines on appropriate clothing and appearance at our workplace, so that we promote a positive image and staff look professional.

It is important that you appear clean, smart and professionally dressed at all times. If at any time your dress is not deemed professional by the Headteacher this will be addressed and could result in disciplinary action.

All staff are expected to wear smart clothing suitable, to their environment and role.

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Where we provide safety clothing and equipment, including protective footwear, it should be worn or used as appropriate and directed.

Staff should not wear clothing or jewellery that could present a health and safety risk or cause offence.

12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Trust and school/s, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school on social media.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year, but can be revised as needed. It will be ratified by the Trust Board.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Disciplinary Procedure, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct;
- Grievance Procedures;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Anti-corruption and Bribery Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Social Media Policy.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____