



**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES POLICY**

**Presented for approval to  
AMAT Trustees Standards Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020  
and subsequently approved and adopted on the same date.**

**(Presented for information to all AMAT schools  
(to Alsager School's full GB on 21/10/20,  
To WVPS's full GB on 23/11/20  
and to Alsager Highfield's Primary School IEB on 1/12/20)**

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October 2020**

**Chair of AMAT Standards  
Trustees: Mr Peter Cox**

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Peter Cox', written over a light blue circular background.

**Date: 02/12/20**

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### **1. AIMS, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES**

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

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. To give clear guidance to employees to ensure that they are fully aware of the standards of conduct and behaviour required of them both inside work and, where applicable, in their personal life.

School staff have an influential position in the school and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the Teachers' Standards and we expect that that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

We expect all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

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

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive.

- The responsibility for complying with this code lies with employees, who are encouraged to seek advice if they are in any doubt about the interpretation or impact of any aspect of the code
- Employees also need to take care that their behaviour outside the workplace does not conflict with their work responsibilities and will not bring the Trust or a school into disrepute
- 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.

### **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. This policy also complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

### **3. GENERAL OBLIGATIONS**

Staff set an example to pupils and others. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- Treat pupils 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, and will not exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

- Understand the statutory frameworks and standards they must act within

#### **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, or neglect.

- Staff will familiarise themselves with our 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 safeguarding policy and procedures are available to all staff. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.
- The duty to safeguard pupils/students includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in each school for Child Protection.
- Staff must not demean or undermine pupils/students, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

#### **5. 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 one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

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

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

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

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable.

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

#### **6. COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

- School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should avoid using their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.
- Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents 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' or parents' social media profiles.

- Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.
- Staff should be aware of the school's e-safety policy and AMAT's social media policy.

#### **7. 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.
- Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.
- We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

#### **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

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.

#### **9. RECRUITMENT**

Employees who are involved in the recruitment and selection process should follow the School's policies on recruitment and selection and should ensure that all appointments are made on merit. It is unlawful for an appointment which is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the job required.

Recruitment and Selection processes place a wide range of employees in a position where they may be able to influence decisions. Employees involved in the process must be specifically trained to ensure that candidates are selected on their ability to do the job required.

Employees should not be involved in any appointment where they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with any of the applicants. This also includes providing a reference.

#### **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 school property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes.

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

### **11. DRESS CODE**

- Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner and/or follow the school's dress code (if applicable)
- Outfits will not be overly revealing.
- Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

### **12. CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK**

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

### **13. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, 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
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding
- E-safety
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Social networking Guidelines
- Staff Dress Code (if applicable)

### **14. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

It is acknowledged that employees who work together may form close personal friendships and, in some cases, romantic relationships. Whilst the School would not generally wish to interfere with such friendships and relationships, there would be cause for concern, and/or action to be taken, if potential or actual difficulties and problems at work were to arise from such relationships. Similar concerns could also arise where family members work closely together.

All employees have an obligation to the School not to compromise standards of behaviour, conduct or performance through personal or family relationships. They are expected to act responsibly and to ensure that such relationships do not influence or prejudice the conduct of School/Trust business, bring the School/Trust into disrepute, or cause offence and embarrassment to other colleagues. Additionally, employees must never be involved in recruitment, disciplinary action or other employment matters relating to someone with whom they have a personal or family relationship.

Where employees feel that a personal or family relationship at work may lead to problems or conflict they should discuss this with the Head Teacher/Executive Head [or Chair of Governors/Executive Head in the case of a Head Teacher] so that any potential difficulties can be resolved. Similarly, where a Head Teacher/Executive Headteacher [or Chair of Governors in the case of a Head Teacher] has cause for concern about relationships within School, they should discuss this with the employees concerned to seek to resolve any issues that might occur. Where it is felt

that a relationship at work is causing, or is likely to cause, real difficulties, advice should be sought from Education HR.

Applicants for posts within the School are asked to disclose any personal or family relationships with existing School employees or members of the Governing Board so that it can be discussed with them during the selection process. Failure to do so could disqualify the applicant. Unless, there are exceptional circumstances, such relationships should not generally affect the decision to appoint or not appoint the applicant but will allow for appropriate arrangements to be made, where necessary, to reduce the possibility of problems arising from the relationship.

#### **15. EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES OR EMPLOYMENT**

It is recognised that employees may wish to undertake various activities outside work. However, employees should not take on any type of external private work or activity which conflicts with the School's interests or which prevents them from doing their normal job properly or from fulfilling the terms of their contract of employment. They must also ensure that they understand and can comply with both Working Time and Health and Safety Regulations before undertaking external private work or activities.

All employees are required to complete an annual declaration of interest return, even if this is to confirm that they have nothing to declare, and to then report issues as and when they occur.

On this basis employees must not:

- Undertake private work or activities during their normal working hours
- Use School premises, property or facilities for private work or activities.
- Undertake any private work which prevents them from carrying out the full range of their normal duties, including contractual overtime.
- Undertake any private work or activities which could involve or bring about a conflict of interest with their normal job.

#### **16. USE OF SCHOOL IDENTIFY, PROPERTY AND FACILITIES**

Where employees are using social networking/external internet sites in their personal life, they must ensure that they comply with the Trust's Social Media Policy, taking care to maintain the reputation and confidentiality of the Trust/school at all times.

School letter-headed paper must only be used for official correspondence and employees must never use this type of paper for personal correspondence.

Employees who are asked to give a personal reference for a work colleague must make it clear that the reference is being given on a personal basis and that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the School. As above, letter-headed paper must not be used in these circumstances.

## **17. CONFIDENTIALITY/DISCLOSURE OR INFORMATION**

### **Data Protection**

Employees must follow the **School's Policies on Confidentiality** at all times and should be fully aware of the provisions of the Data Protection Act in relation to any information that they receive, hold, or use whether manually or electronically.

#### **In addition, employees must not:**

- Disclose or use confidential work-related information for personal gain or benefit or pass it on to others who do not have clearance to receive the information or who might use it in an inappropriate way.
- Give information to the media, or other third party, unless authorised to do so.
- Prevent another person from gaining access to information that they are lawfully entitled to.
- Disclose confidential or personal information about someone else, unless the request is from an approved source such as HMRC or the Department of Work and Pensions or, where the subject has authorised it, from a bank or building society.
- Disclose sensitive personal information about an employee when providing a reference for that person, unless they have given their agreement.
- Where an employee is in any doubt, they should always seek guidance from their line manager or, if appropriate, from the School's Data Protection Officer.

## **18. EQUALITY**

The school will ensure that, when implementing this Code of Conduct, no employee will be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender or transgender, marital status or civil partnership, racial group, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity. This means that the Code may need to be adjusted to cater for the specific needs of an individual including the provision of information in alternative formats where necessary.

## **19. MONITORING & REVIEW**

The effectiveness of this Code of Conduct will be monitored by the Executive Senior Leadership Team for AMAT and local governing bodies. They will ensure that it is operating fairly, consistently and effectively.

This code will be reviewed in light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.

*Date and time last amended 08/12/2020 13:47*