

# Frank Field Education Trust



## Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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David Wooff



**Frank Field**  
Education Trust

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## **Introduction to this Policy document**

All adults who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care.

However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them.

Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event but, when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children. It is, therefore, essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and young people and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so.

The purpose of this policy is to provide absolute clarity for all staff at FFET on our shared responsibilities in safeguarding our pupils and what is expected of all adults who work with children in terms of professional conduct. The policy will detail safer working practices for all adults who work with children and will make clear the Trust's expectations. It is important that all staff and volunteers read this Policy and embed the principles into day to day work with children.

This policy reflects the current Government guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'; 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and specific guidance published by the Government Office 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for adults who work with Children and Young People'. This policy is also compliant with the multi-agency safeguarding procedures for the Local Children's Safeguarding Boards in the areas in which FFET academies are located.

### **Links with other Policies**

This Policy has obvious links with the wider safeguarding agenda and specifically all policies that make up the safeguarding suite of documents. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Managing Allegations against adults who work with children Policy and Staff Disciplinary Policy. When ratifying or reviewing the policy, links should be made with other relevant policies.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, places them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts.

### **The guidance aims to:**

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- support FFET in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or Codes of Practice expected of all adults who work with children;
  - support FFET in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support Safer Recruitment practice (Links to the Safer Recruitment Policy);
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people;
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused;
- links to the Managing Allegations Policy; and
- ensures that staff are familiar with, and know how to access, the FFET Policy and procedures for managing allegations against staff.

### **Underpinning Principles**

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- it is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people;
- adults who work with children 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;
- adults should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way;
- the same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity;
- adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this Policy.

### **Expectation of all adults who work with children**

All adults who work with children and young people have a crucial role to play in shaping their lives. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This Policy has been produced to help adults working across the Trust to establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard young people.

This means that this Policy:

- applies to all adults working across the Trust, regardless of role, position or responsibilities;
- may provide guidance where an individual's suitability to work with children and young people has been called into question.

The guidance contained in this Policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults who work with children and young people. Adults whose practice deviates from this guidance and/or their professional or employment-related Code of Conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with pupils or children and young people in any capacity.

This means that adults should:

- have a clearer understanding of the contents and expectations set out in this Policy;
- discuss any uncertainties or confusion with their direct line manager;
- have an understanding of what behaviours may call into question their suitability to continue to work with children and young people.

## **Duty of Care**

All adults who work with, and on behalf of children are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources, and safeguard children and young people.

Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, these adults have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

The duty of care is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children and young people. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the adult which, at all times, should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Everyone expects high standards of behaviour from adults who work with children and young people. When individuals accept such work, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Employers also have a duty of care towards their employees, both paid and unpaid, under the Health and Safety at Work Act. This requires them to provide a safe working environment for adults and provide guidance about safe working practices. Employers also have a duty of care for the wellbeing of employees and to ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. The Human Rights Act sets out important principles regarding protection of individuals from abuse by state organisations or people working for those institutions. Adults who are subject to an allegation should, therefore, be supported and the principles of natural justice applied (Please refer to the Managing Allegations Policy).

## **Making a Professional Judgement**

This policy recognises that there may be occasions and circumstances in which adults have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person 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 children in their charge.

Such judgements, in these circumstances, must always be recorded promptly and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the relevant academy or Head Teacher / Principal. In undertaking these actions individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably. Adults must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably. It is advisable that a written account is documented in the child's child protection file, in such circumstances.

## **Power and Positions of Trust**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Adults have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Adults must always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They must report and record any incident with this potential.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

This means that adults should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage;
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children and young people; or
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature or which may become so.

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is, therefore, expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.

There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or young people. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence or inappropriate content on social media would be examples of such behaviour.

Adults in contact with children and young people must, therefore, understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting once participating / employed in a position of trust.

The behaviour of an adult's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and young people in the workplace. Adults should be open and transparent with their employer in such circumstances.

## **Dress and Appearance**

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However adults must dress in ways which are professionally appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.

Adults who work with children and young people should ensure they take care to ensure they are

dressed appropriately and professionally for the tasks and the work they undertake. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- is appropriate for their role;
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative;
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding;
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans; and
- is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.

## **The Use of Personal Living Space**

No child or young person can be in, or invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents / carers and senior managers or the home has been designated by the organisation or regulatory body as a work place e.g. child-minders, foster carers.

It is not appropriate for any other organisations to expect or request that private living space be used for work with children and young people. Under no circumstances children or young people assist with chores or tasks in the home of an adult who works with them, including being asked to do so by friends or family of that adult.

This means that adults must:

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable situation;
- challenge any request for their accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the organisation;
- be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries; and
- refrain from asking children and young people to undertake jobs or errands.

## **Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism**

The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people must be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts as rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children, whilst in other situations the giving of a gift to an individual child or young person will be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with senior manager and the parent or carer.

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when adults may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the adult has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it with the senior manager and/or parent or carer and the action is approved and recorded. Any gifts will be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware, however, that the giving of gifts can, in certain circumstances, be misinterpreted by others as a gesture, either to bribe or groom a young person. Adults will exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness.

Methods and criteria for selection will always be transparent and subject to scrutiny. Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults - e.g. on special occasions or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable.

Please refer to the ***FFET Gifts and Hospitality Policy*** for further information.

## **Infatuations**

Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them.

These adults must deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. Any such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and therefore, make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.

An adult, who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation, must discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Principal/ senior manager or parent/carer so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

This means that adults must:

- report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) to their direct line manager, that suggest that a child or young person may have developed an infatuation with an adult in the workplace; and
- always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.

## **Communication with Children and Young People (including the Use of Technology)**

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new technologies, children and young people need opportunities to use and explore the digital world, using multiple devices from multiple locations. It is now recognised that e-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Adults working in this area must, therefore, ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. This means working to the Trust's Acceptable Use Policy in relation to use of technology, (which also includes the use of social media, e.g. Facebook).

The Trust's 'Acceptable Use Policy' will detail the way in which new and emerging technologies may and may not be used and identify the sanctions for misuse.

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, must take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

Adults must not share any personal information with a child or young person. They must not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults must ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults must also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They must not give their personal contact details to children and young people including email, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers.

E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child or young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with FFET's policy.

This means that FFET:

- Have adopted and implemented an 'Acceptable Use Policy' in respect of all technology including Laptops, computers, mobile phones, tablets etc
- This Policy must make clear that the use of mobile phones and devices with cameras must not be used where there is access to children, unless there are circumstances where the use of such a device can be justified, e.g. the group leader having a mobile phone on their person during an educational visit in case of an emergency.

This means that adults must:

- not give their personal contact details to children and young people, including the use of mobile phones, and details of any blogs or personal websites;
- only use equipment e.g. mobile phone, provided by the Trust to communicate with children. Make sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used;
- only make contact with a child or young person for professional reasons;
- not use the internet or web based communication channels to send personal messages to a child or young person;
- ensure that if a social networking site is used, details are not to be shared with children and young people and privacy settings are set to the maximum; and
- recognise that the FFET policy prohibits staff from being 'friends' on social networking channels such as Facebook etc. with pupils, present and past, of any academy and their parents.

## **Social Contact**

Adults who work with children and young people must not seek to have social contact with them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed in advance with senior managers, or where an adult does not work for an organisation, the parent or carers. If a child or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult must exercise their professional judgement in making a response but must always discuss the situation with his/her manager or with the parent of the child or young person, before any response is given. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Adults must be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, e.g. pastoral work in the community, care must be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries at all times. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the adult's own family or personal networks.

This means that adults must:

- have no secret social contact with children and young people or their parents;
- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work; and
- understand that some communications may be called into question and will need to be justified.

## **Sexual Contact**

All adults must clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children and young people. Intimate or sexual relationships between children/young people and the adults who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust.

Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable. Any sexual activity between an adult and child or young person with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

Children and young people are protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts; it may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening". There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Adults must be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process and as such will give rise to concerns about the adult's behaviour.

## **Physical Contact**

There are also occasions when it is entirely appropriate for adults to have some physical contact with the child or young person with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, adults will only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults must not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication. Permission must be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made.

Where the child is very young, there must be a discussion, and a prior documented agreement with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary. When physical contact is made with a child this must be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Adults, nevertheless, must use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Physical contact which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless there is explicit agreement on the need for, and nature of, that contact. This would then be part of a formally agreed plan or within the parameters of established, agreed and legal professional protocols on physical contact e.g. sport activities or medical procedures. Any such arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, and subsequently documented and justified in terms of the child's needs, be consistently applied and be open to scrutiny.

Physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an adult believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances must be reported to the senior manager outlined in the procedures for handling allegations and an appropriate record immediately made.

Parents/carers must also be informed in such circumstances. Where a child seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the

needs of the child and advice and support sought for the adult concerned.

It is recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Adults must be particularly aware of this when it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the adult to sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with a senior manager and the parent/carer as soon as possible.

## **Behaviour Management**

All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Adults must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child.

Please refer to the Behaviour and Safety Policy for further information.

## **Children and Young People in Distress**

Professional guidance must be followed at all times and adults must be aware of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour when comforting a child or diffusing a situation. This is particularly important when working on a one-to-one basis.

For all adults working with children, there will be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall, separation from parent, etc. Adults must use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.

Where an adult has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, or is concerned that an action may be misinterpreted, this must be promptly reported and discussed with a senior manager and parents/carers.

## **Intimate Care**

Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children on a regular basis, for example assisting young children with toileting, providing intimate care for children with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact must comply with professional codes of practice or guidance and/or be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed with parents, relevant professionals and Trust staff.

Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy for further information.

## **Personal Care**

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision must be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Adults need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the children and young people with whom they work.

## **First Aid and administration of Medication**

Health and Safety legislation places duties on all employers to ensure appropriate health and safety policies and equipment are in place and an appropriate person is appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements.

Any employee may volunteer to undertake this task but it is not a contractual requirement and appropriate training will be given before an individual takes on a role which may require administering first aid or medication.

It is expected that adults working with children and young people should be aware of basic first aid techniques. It is not, however, a contractual requirement and, whilst adults may volunteer to undertake such tasks, they must be suitably trained and qualified before administering first aid and/or any agreed medication.

When administering first aid, wherever possible, adults must ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents will always be informed when first aid has been administered. In circumstances where children need medication regularly, a Health Care Plan will have been previously established to ensure the safety and protection of children and the adults who are working with them. Depending upon the age and understanding of the child, they will, where appropriate, be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment including, for example, any ointment, use of inhalers.

Please refer to the First Aid Policy for further information.

## **One to One Situations**

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place. It is however, appropriate to state that where there is a need, agreed with a senior manager and/or parents/carers, for an adult to be alone with a child or young person, certain procedures and explicit safeguards must be in place.

Adults will be offered training and guidance for the use of any areas of the workplace which may place themselves or children in vulnerable situations. This would include those situations where adults work directly with children and young people in unsupervised settings and/or isolated areas within community settings or in street based projects for example.

One to one situations have the potential to make a child/young person more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one to one settings with children and young people may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities must be recognised so that when one to one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken. Every attempt will be made to ensure the safety and security of children and young people and the adults who work with them. There are occasions where managers will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work.

These assessments will take into account the individual needs of the child/young person and the individual worker and any arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Meetings with children and young people outside agreed working arrangements must not take place without the prior agreement of senior managers and parents or carers.

## **Home Visits**

Where home visits are part of the role, it is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and young people and the adults who work with them. Risk assessments will include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household.

Specific consideration must be given to visits outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment by the Safeguarding Lead, appropriate risk management measures must be in place before visits are agreed. Where little or no information is available, visits must not be made alone. There will be occasions where risk assessments are not possible or not available, e.g. when emergency services are used. In these circumstances, a record must always be made of the circumstances and outcome of the home visit. Such records must always be available for scrutiny and shared promptly with the DSL in the relevant school.

Under no circumstances must an adult visit a child in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such a one-off arrangement is required, the adult must have a prior discussion with a senior manager and the parents or carers and a clear justification for such arrangement is agreed and recorded.

## **Transporting Children and Young People**

There will be occasions when adults are expected or asked to transport children as part of their duties. Adults who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers must wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Adults must also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. Where adults transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist licence/insurance, e.g. PCV or LGV19, staff must ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle.

It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the prior attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the parents/carers. There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at further risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported promptly to a senior manager and parents/carers.

## **Photography and Videos**

Working with children and young people may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child or young person must always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose. Careful consideration will be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken.

Care must be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for

further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

Adults need to remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings. It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their personal use.

## **Access to inappropriate images and Internet Usage**

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children and young people, if proven.

Adults should not use equipment belonging to their organisation to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children. Adults should ensure that children and young people are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Organisations and adults need to ensure that internet equipment used by children have the appropriate controls with regards to access e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential. Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Adults will be informed not to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

## **Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is 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 a 'nagging 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.

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.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our Trust values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

## **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 Trust property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £25.00 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

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

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

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the Trust, the member of staff will advise the Trust as such as soon as reasonably practicable. 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.

## **Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the Trust and its schools, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. 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 and its school on social media, any conduct of this nature could lead to disciplinary action.

## **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. The Trust has a clear and accessible Whistleblowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Adults who use Whistleblowing procedure should be made aware that their employment rights are protected. Adults should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the DSL or Principal and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

## **What to do if you are worried that a child may be being abused?**

Practice Reminder: If an employee has concerns about the behaviour of an adult that works with children or is aware of information that would lead him/her to question the suitability of that individual working with children, they have a duty to share this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the relevant school in line with the Managing Allegations Policy and the Whistle-Blowing Policy.

If the employee has concerns about the welfare of a child, he/she should share the concerns with the DSL. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Everyone working within the Trust with children and young people should be familiar with the Safeguarding procedures documented in the 'Safeguarding Policy for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people'. All Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for each school/academy (as shown in the Safeguarding Policy). As per the Safeguarding Policy.