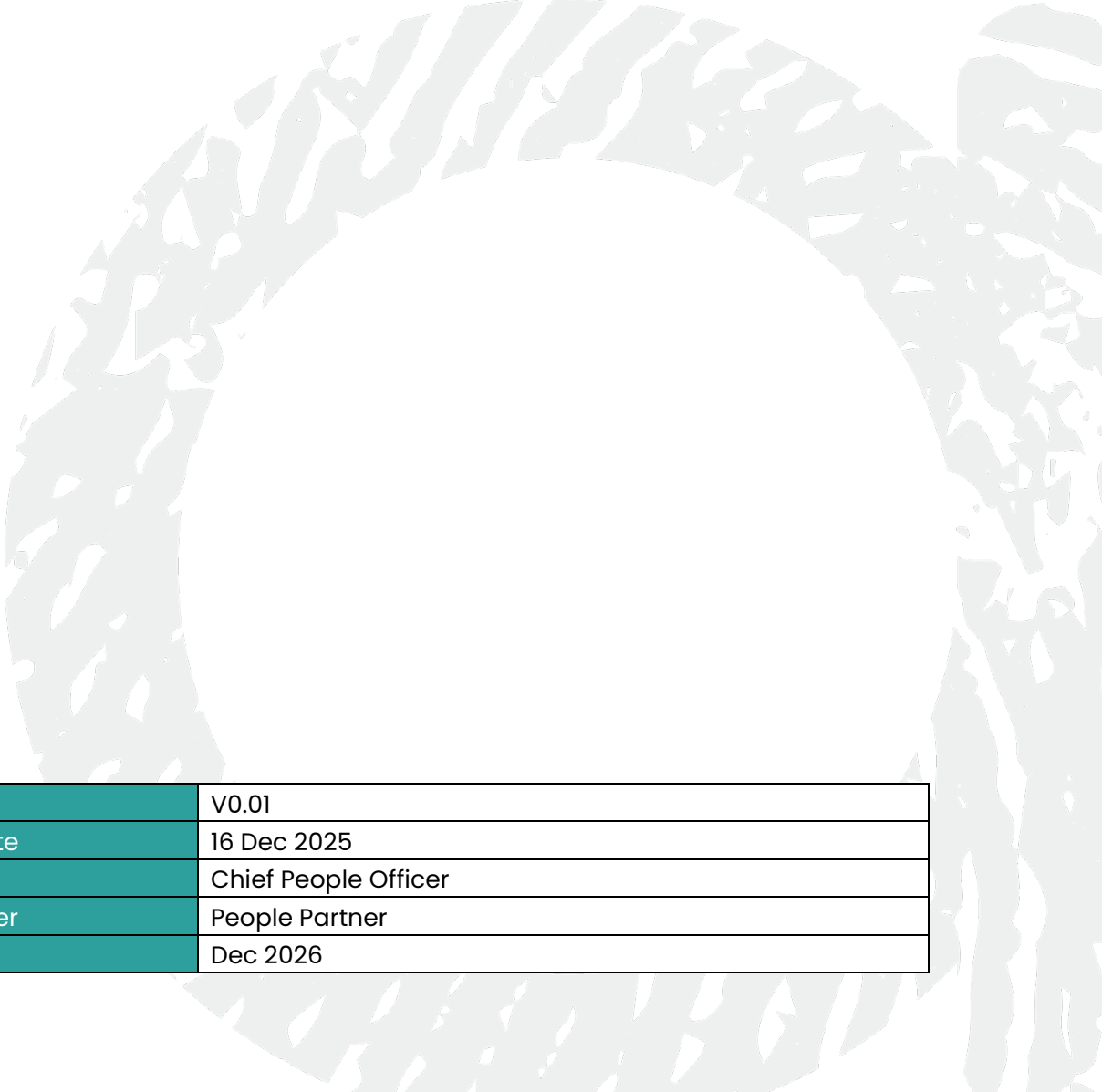


Staff code of conduct



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1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of intent

- 1.1.1. Authentic Education (aE) 'The Trust' expects all pupils to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment.
- 1.1.2. All employees should understand that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders should set a positive and professional example.
- 1.1.3. The Trust recognises that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, the Trust considers it important to clarify the expected standards.
- 1.1.4. This policy forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it and with the associated Trust and Academy policies may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.
- 1.1.5. This document applies to all staff members who are:
 - Employed by the Trust including volunteers; and
 - Employed in units or bases that are attached to the Trust.
- 1.1.6. This document does not apply to:
 - Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the Local Authority;
 - Employees of external contractors
- 1.1.7. These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the Trust, for example, the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1.2. Audience

This policy is intended for use by all support, teaching staff, volunteers and management of Authentic Education.

1.3. Revision history

Issue	Date	Author	Changes
V0.01	13/05/2025	Kelsey Etheridge	Update to new template and change to aE.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1. This policy has due regard to all legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
 - The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Education Act 2002
 - The Children Act 1989
 - The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended)
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
- 2.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
 - DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025' (KCSIE)
 - DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
 - DfE (2018) 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'
- 2.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust and Academy policies and documents:
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Dress Code Policy
 - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
 - Equality & Diversity Policy
 - Equality Information & Objectives
 - Leave of Absence Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Care and Control of Pupils Policy
 - ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

3. Professional behaviour and conduct

- 3.1. Staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct such that public confidence in their integrity is sustained.
- 3.2. Staff will:
 - have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school.
 - maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
 - take care of themselves and others affected by their activity at school.

- cooperate with school leaders in meeting their duties under the relevant regulations.
- treat pupils, parents, colleagues and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position, showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extracurricular trips and visits.
- act appropriately in terms of the views they express – in particular, political views – and the use of school resources at all times.

3.3. Staff will not:

- use foul or abusive language.
- perpetrate discrimination, bullying, harassment, or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse.
- misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications, or experience.
- seek to bring the school into disrepute.
- use school resources for political purposes.

4. Safeguarding pupils

- 4.1. In accordance with KCSIE, all staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect their welfare.
- 4.2. All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.
- 4.3. To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm or lead others to question their actions.
- 4.4. In accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Serious violence

- FGM
 - Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
 - Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
 - Bullying; this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- 4.5. All staff will receive induction in safeguarding children. The induction programme will include basic child protection information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child and advice on safe working practice.
- 4.6. In accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff will also be aware that the following factors could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues:
- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans);
 - Pupils requiring mental health support;
 - Looked After Children (LAC) and previously LAC; and
 - Pupils with SEND
 - Pupils who identify as or are perceived to be LGBTQ+
 - Pupils with mental health needs.
 - Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
 - Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.
- 4.7. If a staff member identifies a pupil who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 4.8. In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or pupil would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL. Staff will not assume a colleague will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.
- 4.9. Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the school, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature.

- 4.10. Any staff member who has concerns about another staff member's actions or intent that may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm will report this in line with the Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy, or Whistleblowing Policy, immediately so appropriate action can be taken. All allegations will be dealt with objectively and reasonably as outlined in these policies. This reporting process should also be followed to report concerns about supply staff and volunteers.
- 4.11. Upskirting is not tolerated by the Trust and any incidents of upskirting must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.
- 4.12. If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the academy where they are employed they will do so through the Trust Safeguarding Lead; if they still feel unable to raise an issue through this route they will use other whistleblowing channels including contacting the NSPCC's helpline on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff members can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.
- 4.13. If the concern is regarding a Principal or Director, staff will report this to the Chief People Officer.
- 4.14. If the concern is regarding the Chief Executive Officer staff will report this to the Chair of Trustees.
- 4.15. All staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction and throughout employment. All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- 4.16. Staff will be aware that confidentiality will never be promised to a pupil – staff will understand the procedure if a pupil discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 4.17. Staff will be aware of the Trust's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:
- the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual;
 - the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and
 - the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

5. Appearance and dress

- 5.1. The Trust expects that staff members will comply with the Dress Code Policy. Please see the Dress Code Policy on the staff Intranet for further information.

6. Attendance

- 6.1. The Trust expects that staff members will comply with the Attendance at Work Policy and Guidelines. Staff members should:
- attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays;
 - make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible;
 - refer to the Trust's Leave of Absence Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
 - follow the Trust's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

7. Professional behaviour and conduct

- 7.1. Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- 7.2. The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.
- 7.3. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.
- 7.4. Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the Trust into disrepute.
- 7.5. Staff members will inform the relevant Director (for Trust staff) or Principal (for academy staff), in writing, if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- 7.6. Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits too. All staff attending a trip or visits will act in accordance with this policy.
- 7.7. Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of the Trust resources at all times and will not use the Trust's resources for party political purposes.

8. Conduct outside of work

- 8.1. Staff may undertake work outside of the Trust, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Trust. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the Trust into disrepute or affect an individual's work performance.
- 8.2. Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the Trust community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.
- 8.3. Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the academy, the Trust (employer) or the Trust community into disrepute. This is explored further in section 16.

9. Smoking, alcohol and other substances

- 9.1. Staff will not smoke or use e-cigarettes on the school premises, in the immediate vicinity of the school premises, or where they could be seen by pupils, parents or visitors.
- 9.2. Staff will not smoke or use e-cigarettes whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site such as when on educational visits and trips.
- 9.3. The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- 9.4. If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the Trust has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedures including referral to the police.

10. Health and safety

- 10.1. Staff members will:
 - be familiar with and adhere to the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the Trust environment safe and well;
 - comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them;
 - comply with hygiene requirements;
 - comply with accident reporting requirements; and
 - Where the employee has secondary employment, which is likely to exceed the 48-hour working week, inform the Principal, line manager or HR Academy Lead of any

paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

11. Declaration of interests

- 11.1. Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the Trust.
- 11.2. For the purposes of this policy a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.
- 11.3. The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value including the following:
 - payments for services;
 - equity interests;
 - intellectual property rights; and
 - hospitality or gifts.
- 11.4. Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the Trust.
- 11.5. Non-financial interests can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the Trust. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.
- 11.6. Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:
 - pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality;
 - participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship;
 - where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague.
- 11.7. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

- 11.8. Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with the Trust's activities.
- 11.9. Failure to make a relevant declaration of interest is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the Principal, line manager or their trade union.
- 11.10. All academy declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted to the Academy's HR Academy Lead for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.
- 11.11. All Trust Office declarations including nil returns, will be submitted to the Clerk to Trustees for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests

12. Relationships with pupils

- 12.1. The Trust expects that staff will:
 - maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary;
 - not discuss personal information with pupils, such as concerning their lifestyle or marital status, unless it is directly relevant to the topic being taught;
 - act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions;
 - ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship;
 - inform the principal as soon as possible if a pupil is consistently attempting to befriend or contact a member of staff on social media;
 - ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils;
 - only contact pupils via the Trust's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.
- 12.2. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

13. Physical contact with pupils

- 13.1. The Trust understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care. Staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant Trust and Academy policies.
- 13.2. When physical contact is made with a pupil, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 13.3. Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.
- 13.4. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be considered.
- 13.5. Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions.
- 13.6. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and therefore will be prepared to justify their actions.
- 13.7. Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.
- 13.8. Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.
- 13.9. Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the Academy Principal and appropriate procedures will be followed.
- 13.10. Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.
- 13.11. If a pupil is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 13.12. Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the Trust's Care and Control Policy.

14. Showering and changing

- 14.1. Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing before/after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe and that they are not subjected to bullying.
- 14.2. The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 14.3. Where possible, female staff will supervise girls and male staff will supervise boys.
- 14.4. Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy and will only stay for as long as is necessary.
- 14.5. Staff will never change or shower in the same area as pupils.

15. Transporting pupils

- 15.1. When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured for business use.
- 15.2. Consent is obtained from parents/carers as required under the academy's procedures for transporting pupils. Staff are aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

16. Financial inducements

- 16.1. Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Trust's Anti-Bribery, Gifts and Hospitality Policy at all times.
- 16.2. Staff members will:
 - familiarise themselves and comply with the Trust's financial regulations;
 - declare any gifts received by completing the Gifts Register with the exception of:
 - low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted;
 - gifts offered by parents or pupils to Trust and Academy staff to express their gratitude but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts;
 - hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting;
 - authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the Trust's business which shall be at the Trust's expense.

- not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned;
- declare any gift that cannot be returned to the Chief Finance and Operations Officer who will decide how it will be used;
- only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the Chief Finance and Operations Officer.

17. Acceptable use of technology

- 17.1. Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement at all times.
- 17.2. Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 17.3. Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members or following pupils or their family members on social media.
- 17.4. The Trust understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils in one of the Trust's academies and therefore may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.
- 17.5. Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the academy or the Trust's community into disrepute. Staff should refer to the Trust Staff Social Media Policy for further information.

18. Premises, equipment and communication

- 18.1. The Trust's equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised.
- 18.2. Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of the Trust's equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.
- 18.3. Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Academy Principal or their line manager.

- 18.4. The Trust reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.
- 18.5. Communication systems may be accessed when the Trust suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the IT Service Provider, only with the permission of the Data Protection Officer.
- 18.6. Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the Data Protection Officer. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 18.7. The Trust's equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the Trust when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so.

19. Photography and videos

- 19.1. Photographs and videos will only be taken using the Trust's equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited.
- 19.2. Consent for taking photographs is obtained from parents at the beginning of the academic year or the pupil themselves if they are deemed old enough and able to make the decision for themselves.
- 19.3. The age of consent that is legislated is 13 and above; however, this is only applicable for online services provided directly to children. For everything else, an appropriate age for consent is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Data Protection Officer (DPO) or Academy Principal and a pupil's parents (where appropriate).
- 19.4. Pupils who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or be filmed will have their wishes respected.
- 19.5. The Academy Principal will be notified of the proposed use of the imagery or video and the equipment and ensure that the use of such is included in lesson plans where this is necessary.
- 19.6. All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.
- 19.7. Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

20. Data protection

- 20.1. Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:
- consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented;
 - ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary; and
 - securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.
- 20.2. Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the academies, the Trust, its employees or the LA to other parties.
- 20.3. The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.
- 20.4. Staff members have the right to request access the data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the DPO or Academy Principal in writing in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

21. Probity of records

- 21.1. The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

22. Contacts

- 22.1. Staff members will not use school business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

23. Monitoring and review

- 23.1. This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 23.2. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document as part of their induction programme.