



STAFF PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pool Academy has three clear Values. All staff should be aware of our Values and at all times use them as guidelines in all aspects of our professional life when at work.. The three Values are:-

Aspiration: To have high standards and to challenge ourselves to do our very best

Belonging: Every individual is accepted and valued as a person in their own right

Respect: Other learners, staff, our community, ourselves and our environment

1.2 These guidelines and disciplinary procedures are designed to protect staff from misunderstandings in their professional relationships and from allegations that might arise as a consequence.

1.3 To make it clear that any relationship between staff, students, parents/carers suppliers or any other stakeholder that may potentially bring the Academy into disrepute, must be notified to the respective line manager with immediate effect.

1.4 To make it clear that failure to comply with 1.3 above will lead to an investigative/disciplinary hearing that may lead to dismissal.

2. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- Staff Grievance Procedure.
- Teaching Standards
- Racism Policy
- Child Protection Policy including Prevent Strategy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- e-Safety Policy
- Lone working register and home working risk assessments

- Complaints Policy

3. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF STAFF

- 3.1** Where relationships occur between members of staff, it is in their interests and the Academy's to ensure they deal appropriately with potential conflicts of interest or possible disruption to working arrangements with colleagues or students. Broadly, members of staff should not engage in any behaviour which is likely to bring the Academy into disrepute or have a serious adverse effect on peer activities, student tuition, pastoral matters, or other aspects of Academy life.
- 3.2** Some types of activity could be actionable within the Academy's Disciplinary Procedure. It is also conceivable that peers or subordinates could implement the Grievance Procedure against individual members of staff, if they felt disadvantaged by the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. The Academy management and pastoral team is available to students facing difficulties, and this document plus the Teaching Standards present an overall framework for acceptable working practice. It is professional conduct to read the professional conduct guidelines and—acquaint themselves with all of these procedures, which are available from the Academy.

4. GENERAL ISSUES - GUIDELINE TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- 4.1** The issues listed below must be brought to the attention of any new member of staff and all staff should be reminded of these issues on an annual basis. This will ensure that all staff involved in the provision of teaching and learning are clear about boundaries and expectations.
- 4.2** Language - staff should refrain from using inappropriate, foul and abusive language. This type of language used in an aggressive, insulting or offensive manner will lead to disciplinary action. Shouting – Staff should NOT raise their voice to students, other staff, parents or carers. Unless in a situation where in doing so it prevents injury / danger to the individual (ie javelin lesson).
- 4.3** Avoid physical contact - even what is meant as a comforting gesture can be misconstrued.
- 4.4** Home telephone numbers – you may feel it is inappropriate to give your home telephone number to learners and it is perfectly legitimate to decline to do so. However, some staff find this can be useful. Think carefully before you decide to do this, and if you do, make it clear in what circumstances learners can telephone you (e.g. to advise of absences) and that you should only be contacted on Academy business.
- a) It is inappropriate to add / contact a student as a friend on any form of social media.
- 4.5** Favouritism – it is important to be seen to treat all learners consistently and with equity. Avoid circumstances where it might appear that you are giving anyone undue attention. This does not mean that you cannot give extra tutorial time to a learner where the situation merits it. It is worth remembering that socialising with students can be misconstrued and can therefore cause difficulties. It is best avoided unless it is a whole group activity.

4.6 Tutorials and other one-to-one contact tutorials should always be on Academy premises or, in the case of offsite activity, at a venue that has been pre-agreed and notified to the line manager. Apart from the fact that staff could be laying themselves open to the possibility of false allegations, there are insurance issues to consider. Staff aware of lone working register and lone working protocols. Residentials are an obvious exception to this and where they are concerned, you are advised to follow the same guidelines as those shown below for one-to-one meetings.

- Make sure that a colleague knows when you are carrying out one-to-one sessions. A list of dates, times and names on the door of the room makes an obvious public statement.
- Where possible, carry out one-to-one sessions with the door open.
- If this is not appropriate, perhaps because the student is distressed, or the matter being discussed is confidential, it is especially important to make sure a colleague knows that the session is taking place and/or to put a notice on the door.
- Where you are having an “emergency” tutorial with a student and it may not be possible to notify a colleague, put a notice on the door indicating that a tutorial is taking place.
- ‘Repeat’ one to one sessions meaning ongoing contact should be referred to Pastoral Team and notes taken of venues, what was said.

4.7 Staff should never engage in racist or discriminatory language or comments, or behaviour that can be construed as such.

4.8 Smoking and e-cigarettes/vaping is banned anywhere on the school site. Any staff smoking or vaping would breach the school’s code of conduct.

4.9 Allegations - any allegation made against an employee, whether in work or outside of work, must be disclosed to the employer promptly and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

5. BOUNDARIES

5.1 Tutoring – good tutoring, like good counselling, is about listening to the learner and not talking about your own experiences. Personal disclosures are inappropriate and may wrongly be taken to imply intimacy. Tutors sometimes feel that sharing common experiences is helpful, but – (“I know how you feel, when I was a learner I had difficulty meeting deadlines” or “I understand what you are going through, I had a sick parent myself”, are inappropriate.) Students should be clear about these boundaries.

5.2 Best practice in counselling/tutoring is to aim for empathetic listening without such disclosures as they tend to move the focus from the learner to the tutor. At times it is appropriate to ask questions, but not of the kind which the learner might perceive as “prying”. Learners have a right to privacy.

5.3 There will be times when a student has personal problems which are significant and may prevent the learning experience from being valuable or even an alternative curriculum attainable by the student. When this type of situation occurs i.e. a serious problem for which the student actively seeks help, a referral to The Pastoral Team for counselling and support may be the appropriate course of action. Tutors should be aware that this facility is available to students and know how and when to make an appropriate referral.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

- 6.1** The Academy has a duty of care to members of its staff and also has clearly defined responsibilities to its students.
- 6.2** Otherwise, allegations against staff may result in the use of the Disciplinary Procedure and/or other related procedures as shown above at “2. Associated Documents”.
- 6.3** The possibility of procedures being specifically activated in response to complaints or allegations will be dependent on the nature of the complaint and the way it is presented e.g. a student may decide to meet with the Principal / Vice Principal or may raise an allegation against a member of staff with the Head of Department or Head of House or Tutor.
- 6.4** If an allegation is made by a student, in the first instance this would be followed up by a pastoral interview. If pastoral deem that further action is necessary it will be passed to the appropriate member of the senior team. Who will take a view and if deemed that further action is necessary will consult the Principal/Vice Principal. If deemed necessary an investigating officer will be appointed by the Principal/Vice Principal.
- 6.5** The member of staff against whom the complaint is made will be presented with full details of the complaint made, and will be barred from any contact outside of lessons with the student while the investigation continues. The investigating officers will be responsible for deciding whether there is a complaint to answer and what the remedy, if proven, will be. This may include disciplinary action if appropriate.
- 6.6** The establishment of an investigation team on this basis is designed to protect the interests of the member of staff as well as the Academy’s position and the student’s rights. Therefore, all statutory obligations to member of staff will be safeguarded and there will be no presumption of guilt or of an act of commission or omission that might jeopardise the member of staff’s or the Academy’s position. The duty of care the Academy has to the member of staff will be a prime feature of the conduct of the investigation, as will the obligations the Academy has towards its students.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1** Guidelines for the compliance of corporate rules on confidentiality can be found in the Contract of Employment and must be viewed in the same regard as the requirements of this document in terms of guidance for suitable levels of staff conduct.

As part of your role you may be given or have access to highly sensitive or private information about a young person or vulnerable adult. This information should be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the young person or vulnerable adult to do so. Accordingly:

- You must not use this information to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the young person concerned.
- In the event of receiving a disclosure of a safeguarding nature, you should not promise to keep the information confidential (see Safeguarding Policy).
- Where possible, seek the consent of the young person before passing on confidential information.
- If you are in doubt about whether a confidence should be passed on, seek guidance from the Principal, Deputy Principal or your line manager.

8. GIFTS AND CORPORATE HOSPITALITY

- 8.1** Any gift or element of corporate hospitality offered as a consequence of employment with the Academy must not be accepted without prior authorisation of the Principal, or in the case of the Principal, the Chair of Governors. This is to ensure that the Academy and individuals are compliant with the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010 and to ensure that no actions could be perceived as bringing the Academy into disrepute. Failure to disclose and obtain permission will lead to an investigative/disciplinary hearing that may lead to dismissal.
- 8.2** Such gifts or events are not to be confused with social events such as awards ceremonies that an individual should attend as part of the performance of their normal duties at the Academy. Authorisation for this is needed from the individual's line manager or Principal/ Vice Principal.

9. PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Underpinning principles:

- The welfare of the young person is paramount.
- You have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.
- You should always be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- You should always apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, race, religious belief and / or sexual identity.

- 9.1** Academy staff must not offer or accept Facebook/social network friendship requests on their personal accounts from current students.
- 9.2** It is essential that Academy Staff who use professional and social network services such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or similar do so in a way that protects staff and students. Staff must be aware that interactions with students or ex-students through professional and social networks are subject to the same need to have regard to safeguarding as any other interaction, and, subject to the same need to behave in such a way as not to bring the Academy into disrepute.

Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour in all circumstances. There may be occasions or circumstances where you feel that you have to take decisions or actions in the best interest of the young person or vulnerable adult which contravene this guidance or where no specific guidance exists. If so:

- You should always consider whether your actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably.
- You should always record your judgements and share it with your manager.
- Be prepared to ask a senior member of staff to clarify the position.

Power and Position of Trust

By virtue of your role at the Academy you will be viewed as occupying a position of trust in relation to students, particularly young people and vulnerable adults. This cannot be a relationship between equals, and you have a responsibility to ensure that this unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Accordingly:

- You should not use your position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine young people.
- You must not use your status to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature or inappropriate nature, or which may become so.

Proprietary and Behaviour

All adults working with young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct. If actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities, this may compromise their position in the workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with young people (e.g. where misuse of drugs or alcohol or acts of violence are concerned). Accordingly:

- You should understand and be aware that you should use judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than just your work setting.
- You should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with young people.

Dress and Appearance

Dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However it is important to dress in ways that are appropriate to role and to tasks undertaken. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticisms or allegations. Accordingly:

- You should not wear clothing which is likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- You should not wear clothing which is likely to distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- You should not wear clothing which has overtly political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- You should wear clothing appropriate to your profession

Personal Living Space

No young person should be invited into the home of a member of staff unless reason for this has been firmly established with the Principal / Vice Principal and the parent/carer. Accordingly:

- You should be vigilant in maintaining your privacy and avoid placing yourself in a vulnerable situation.
- Members of staff should **not be invited** into homes of students

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to young people should always fall under the Academy's arrangements for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny. Care should also be taken to ensure that you do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Accordingly:

- In general you should only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system.
- You should try to ensure that all selection processes concerning young people are fair and wherever practical involve other members of staff.

Infatuations

Occasionally a young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. Such infatuations need to be dealt with sensitively but do carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted. Accordingly:

- You should report to your manager any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest that a young person has developed an infatuation with you / another member of staff.
- You should always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.
- All meetings in this situation should be chaperoned.

Communication with young people

Communication with young people should 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, webcams, personal websites and social networking sites. Accordingly:

- You should not give your personal contact details, including your mobile phone number, to a young person unless the need to do so is appropriate to your professional role and has been discussed with your manager.
- You should only use Academy equipment (including mobile phones) to communicate with young people and only for professional reasons.
- You should not use internet based social networking sites or forums to send personal messages to a young person or their families/family members.

Photographs / Images on iPads or Phones

- Photographs or moving images may be taken of students only if justified as relevant / necessary to their course.
- Consent must be obtained in the usual manner for photographs
- Images should not be stored after their reproduction for display purposes, as per data management policies
- Images of students should not be posted on to personal or social media websites.
- Only the Academy's equipment should be used to take photographs / images.

Social Contact

Adults who work with young people should not seek to have social contact with them or their families unless there is a clear professional justification for this. Where this may be the case staff should take care to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This

also applies to social contact made through interests outside of work or through your own family or personal networks. Accordingly:

- You should have no secret social contact with young people.
- You should consider the appropriateness of any social contact and ensure that any planned social contact is discussed with your manager.

Sexual Contact

Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and young people will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Any sexual activity between a member of staff and a young person may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include causing young people to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

Accordingly:

- You must not have sexual relationships with a young person.
- You should not have any form of communication with a young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, emails, texts, phone calls or physical contact.
- You should not make sexual remarks to or about a young person.
- You should not discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of young people.
- You should never put yourself in a situation where you could be accused of engaging in sexual activities

Physical Contact and Intervention

In general staff should avoid physical contact with young people, unless such contact is clearly linked to a professional role and within parameters of established and agreed protocols, e.g. sports activities or medical procedures. If physical contact is required it should never be secretive and should take place in a safe and open environment. In the context of challenging behaviour on the part of a young person, physical intervention should only be used in exceptional circumstances, if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the young person, vulnerable adult or to others, and be proportionate. Accordingly:

- You should not touch a young person in a way that may be considered indecent.
- You should understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.
- You should always try to defuse situations before they escalate.
- You should report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used.

Preventing radicalisation

The school is committed to preventing pupils from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The school promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing pupils with the opportunity to learn how to discuss and debate points of view and to understand a range of faiths; and by ensuring that all pupils are valued and listened to

within school.

All staff are made aware of the importance of identifying indicators of children being radicalised and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. The school will make appropriate referrals in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The school expects all staff, volunteers, governors, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire school premises to behave in accordance with the school's Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on school premises or at school events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.