

Staff code of conduct

Issued: September 2018
Reviewed December 2021
Next review due: Autumn 2022

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1.0 Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff and volunteers within Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust (BDMAT) to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#).

Staff have an influential position in our schools and the trust as a whole and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards.

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

We expect all our staff to act in accordance with the BDMAT core values of:

Hope – we have hope that there can always be a positive outcome

Honesty – we are honest with all inside and outside our organisation, whilst being sensitive to how we deliver these messages

Integrity – we have strong principles rooted in our Christian mission that lead our actions and decisions

Helpfulness – we work in co-operation and partnership with all staff and stakeholders

Respect – we respect all those that we come across

Dignity and compassion – we treat all those within and outside our organisation with dignity, irrespective of the circumstances, and we show everyone compassion for the difficulties that they are experiencing

Wisdom – The decisions we take are wise; they are based on informed discussions and evidence and we aim to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for all without compromising our values

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

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the trust, its schools, and its pupils.

2.0 Legislation and guidance

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

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3.0 General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality;
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school;
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect;
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within;
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards;
- Not ignore unacceptable behaviour/ language presented by others (children or adults) and will enforce the school behaviour/anti-bullying policies and this policy at all times; and
- Not attend work whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Please refer to the BDMAT's staff drug and alcohol policy available on the BDMAT website.

4.0 Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

School based staff will familiarise themselves with the relevant school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and the BDMAT Whistleblowing policy and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

The schools' child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures and the BDMAT Whistleblowing policy are available on the school websites and are based on the model policies produced by the Local Authorities our schools are located in.

Staff in our central team will familiarise themselves with the BDMAT child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures for central staff, and the Prevent initiative, and the BDMAT Whistleblowing policy and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

This child protection and safeguarding policy is available on the BDMAT website and is based on the model policy produced by Birmingham Local Authority where our central office is located. The BDMAT whistleblowing policy is also on the BDMAT website.

New staff will be given access to copies as part of their induction.

4.1 Low-level concerns about members of staff or volunteers

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harms threshold, 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 one-to-one activities where they can't easily be seen; and
- Using inappropriate language.

The list above is a guide not a definitive list.

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have with the Headteacher or DSL if the Headteacher is not available. If the concern is about the Headteacher the concern should be shared with the BDMAT CEO.

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 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 policies. These are available on the schools' websites.

5.0 Staff-pupil relationships

- a) Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.
- b) This includes the way in which staff and volunteers speak to pupils. A positive, respectful, and encouraging tone should be used at all times. Where it is necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour or to get pupils' attention, it is reasonable for staff and volunteers to raise their voices and/or use an authoritative tone. However, it is not appropriate for employees/volunteers to shout at pupils habitually or speak to them disrespectfully. Employees/volunteers should never set out to cause a pupil to feel frightened, ashamed, or humiliated. Admonishments should focus on behaviour rather than the pupil's personality or character and targets for desired behaviour should be described by the member of staff or volunteer.
- c) All staff and volunteers need to recognise that it is not uncommon for a child or young person to be strongly attracted to an adult who works with them and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff or volunteer who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a child or young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Headteacher/CEO. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

The Headteacher (or CEO) will give careful thought to those circumstances where the staff member/volunteer, child or young person and their parents/carers should be spoken to and will ensure an action plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan will respond sensitively to the child and staff member/volunteer

and maintain the dignity of all. This plan will involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed. Copies of signed forms will be maintained in the staff personnel files.

d) If staff members and pupils must spend time together on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

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

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

However, it is acknowledged that staff and volunteers may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents/carers of pupils, independent of the professional relationship, such as when a parent and teacher are part of the same family/personal network or social/recreational circle.

Those circumstances will usually be easily recognised, openly acknowledged, and should be explicitly declared in writing by staff/volunteers to the Headteacher/CEO using the form in **appendix 1**

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

g) If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff or volunteer should exercise their professional judgement in making a response but **MUST** always discuss the situation with their Headteacher or line manager. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member/volunteer's own family.

h) While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils should only be given as part of an agreed reward system or with the knowledge and agreement of the Headteacher.

i) If a staff member or volunteer is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported to the Headteacher or DSL if Headteacher is unavailable, this is in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. If the concern is about the Headteacher the concern should be raised with the CEO of BDMAT whose contact details are available in the staffroom.

6.0 Physical contact

- a) Staff and volunteers should only touch children in ways which are necessary and appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.
- b) Staff and volunteers should use their professional judgement to comfort or reassure a child for example after a fall, separation from a parent etc. in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.
- c) Staff and volunteers should recognise that not all children feel comfortable about physical contact and, wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.
- d) Staff and volunteers should listen, 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 pupil.
- e) 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.
- f) Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to the individual child.
- g) Staff and volunteers should, therefore, always use their professional judgement.
- h) Staff and volunteers should read and fully adhere to the school's intimate care policy and any care plan and risk assessment put in place when supporting pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- i) Staff and volunteers should read and fully adhere to the following policies and procedures where physical contact with pupils may be unavoidable:
 - Supporting pupils with medical conditions;
 - Health and safety including First aid; and
 - Educational visits.
- j) Staff must only use control and physical intervention as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed. In all cases where physical intervention occurs the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported in the Bound Book and on CPOMS or My Concern, which allows for incidents to be tracked and monitored. This should include

written and signed accounts of all those involved, including the pupil. The parents/carers should be informed on the same day.

7.0 Personal living accommodation including on site provision

Staff and volunteers should:

- be vigilant in maintaining their privacy, including when living in on-site accommodation;
- be mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations;
- refuse any request for their accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the school or trust;
- be mindful of the need to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries; and
- not ask pupils to undertake jobs or errands for their personal benefit.

8.0 Communication and social media

- a) Only use equipment, e.g. mobile phones, and internet services provided by the school/BDMAT to communicate with pupils and their parents/ carers, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used.
- b) Only communicate with pupils and their parents using email, telephone, or social networking for professional purposes and by use of school accounts and school owned ICT equipment. Emails should only be sent to the pupil's school Email address.
- c) School staff's personal social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.
- d) Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.
- e) Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without written consent from the parent or the child themselves if old enough to give valid consent.

9.0 Acceptable use of technology

- a) Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate, or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited

- to, sending obscene emails, gambling, and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.
- b) Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.
 - c) Any images taken on BDMAT equipment will only be retained where there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so, consent is in place and will only be stored securely on BDMAT devices.
 - d) We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.
 - e) All staff are expected to read, sign, and follow the ICT and internet acceptable use policy.

10.0 Use of technology for online/virtual teaching

- a) Staff and children must be fully dressed and wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- b) Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example not in bedrooms; and the background used by staff should be blurred or a virtual background used. If it is not possible to blur the background etc. staff must consider what children can see in the background and whether it would be appropriate in a classroom. This includes photographs, artwork, identifying features, mirrors etc.
- c) Staff will ensure that resources and videos used are age appropriate – in the event that a child feels distressed or anxious about content, they may not have support readily available at home.
- d) Live classes should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- e) Live classes will be kept to a reasonable length of time so that children do not have too much screen time and to minimise disruption for the family.
- f) Language must be professional and appropriate, including that used by any family members in the background.
- g) Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by both the BDMAT Head of IT and the Headteacher for communication with pupils.
- h) Staff should make a written record of the length, time, date, and attendance of any sessions held.
- i) Staff should be aware that filters at a child's home may be set at a threshold which is different to that in use at the school.
- j) It is the responsibility of the staff member to act as a moderator, raising any issues of suitability (of dress, setting, behaviour) with the child and/or parent immediately and ending the online interaction if necessary. The staff member

should make a written record of the incident and share it with the DSL or their line manager depending on the nature of the incident.

11.0 Confidentiality

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

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties;
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others; or
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

12.0 Honesty and integrity

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

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £50 must be declared to the Director of Finance and Operations who will record this on the gifts and hospitality register.

Further information can be found in the BDMAT conflict of interest policy which can be located here:

<https://bdmatschools.com/documents/bdat-conflict-interest-policy/>

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

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

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the school, the member of staff will advise the school 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.

13.0 Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner, including when engaged in online lessons or meetings.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that offensive tattoos are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

14.0 Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the trust, the school, 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 school, Trust and those connected with the organisation on social media.

15.0 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the board of trustees

The board of trustees will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns via reports from the Head of School Support and the CEO.

16.0 Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Conflict of Interest
- Online safety
- BDMAT Acceptable Use of IT
- BDMAT Whistleblowing
- Intimate Care
- Home visits

- Educational visits policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Health and safety including administration of first aid
- BDMAT Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy

APPENDIX 1 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS OUTSIDE OF WORK DECLARATION

Pupil's Name	Relationship

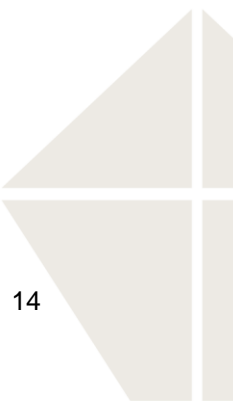
I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of school with students in line with this policy.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher/CEO



APPENDIX 2 Aide memoire for all staff

When we speak to others we will:

- use a positive statement rather than a negative one so that children can learn what we expect of them in any situation.
- use a calm tone of voice, to explain something to or instruct the children, so that they can follow our words without feeling threatened or uncomfortable. We only raise our voice and/or use an authoritative tone where it is necessary to challenge inappropriate behaviour or to get pupils' attention.
- avoid using sarcastic words or phrases as these demean children and prevent them from developing high self-esteem; and
- Always speak respectfully to other adults, even if we disagree with them.

As professionals we will:

- avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration. We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.
- maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school, so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunities for the children.
- work within the school's and BDMAT's policies and practices, so that what we do is consistent with what has been agreed between all members of the staff and the governors.
- treat everyone with respect.
- dress appropriately, setting a good example for the children and showing we are here to work; and
- behave in a positive way despite any personal problems that we may have, especially in front of the children.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

When using any form of ICT, including the Internet, in school/work and outside school/work.

For your own protection we advise that you:

- Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff, and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies.
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook and You Tube.
- Do not put online any text, image, sound, or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.

- Use school ICT systems and resources for all school business.
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal information is kept secure and used appropriately.
- Only take images of pupils and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with BDMAT/school policy and with the knowledge of SLT.
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal, or discriminatory.
- Ensure that your online activity, both in and outside of school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute.
- You have a duty to report any online safety incident which may impact on you, your professionalism, or the school.

APPENDIX 3

Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the BDMAT staff code of conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held

Signed

Date

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher/Line Manager to be filed in personnel file.

