



AGAPE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

A collaboration of schools which enhances the educational experiences and outcomes for children, maximising the benefits of working together, whilst maintaining the individual culture and ethos of each individual school

Staff code of conduct

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Changes history

Version:	Date:	Amended by:	Substantive changes:	Purpose:
1	July 2024		New trust policy	
2	June 2025	Lead Governance Professional	To add the use of fire extinguishers and new equality duty to prevent sexual harassment. To amend the section on dress code, staff-pupil relationships, smoking/vaping and acceptable use of technology.	To reflect new legislation and to reflect existing practice
3	June 2026	Lead Governance Professional	Inclusion of claiming expenses and overtime, breach of AI policy and reference to being a Church of England academy	

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1. Aims, scope and principles

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

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure the schools within our trust are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

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

School staff have an influential position in the school 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 support staff, trustees, members, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We expect all staff to act in accordance with the ethos and values of the Trust and school they work in.

As a member of staff in a Church of England Academy you are required to have regard to the character of the school and its church foundation and to undertake not to do anything contrary to the interests of the foundation.

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 school and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as 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. 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 adhering to our equalities policy and the Equalities Act 2010
- 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
- Adhere to Trust and school policies

4. Safeguarding

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

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child. Staff will also familiarise themselves with the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education and attend safeguarding training on at least an annual basis.

Our child protection/safeguarding and Prevent policies can be found:

Altwood School: on our website: safeguarding policy: [Altwood Church of England School - Safeguarding Policy](#) Prevent policy: [\(altwoodschool.co.uk\) download.asp \(altwoodschool.co.uk\)](#) and in the staff policy folder.

Charvil Piggott Primary School: on our website [The Piggott School - Charvil Primary School Policies & Procedures](#) and on staff only resources.

Piggott Wargrave: [The Piggott School - Statutory Information and Policies](#) and on staff only resources.

Robert Piggott Federation: [The Federation of Robert Piggott Infant and Junior Schools - Safeguarding](#) and in the staff policy folder.

Shinfield St. Mary's Junior: [Shinfield St Mary's CE Junior School - Pupil wellbeing and safeguarding](#) and in the staff policy folder.

New staff will be required to read the policies on the school's respective website.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will either be the Headteacher or a person appointed by the Headteacher. The Chair of Governors or their appointed nominee will be the 'case manager' where the

Headteacher is the subject of the allegation. For staff of the Central Trust Team this will be the CEO or the Chair of Trustees (or their appointed nominee) where the CEO is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm 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 and not uploading them at the earliest opportunity onto the school's network and/or immediately deleting them from the personal device and any associated storage
- 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/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 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/safeguarding policy.

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

4.3 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing reports wrongdoing that it is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- Pupils' or staff members' health and safety being put in danger
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistleblowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or school procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to their Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of the Local Governing Committee. Staff of the Central Trust Team should report their concerns

to the CEO. If the concern is about the CEO, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of the Trust Board. Details of the Chair of the Local Governing Committee can be found on each school's website.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our school's detailed whistleblowing process, please refer to our whistleblowing policy available on each school's website and the Agape Trust website.

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

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

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

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

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

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to individual pupils are not acceptable unless for example they are prizes to recognise achievement with a token monetary value. Staff should take care to give these gifts in a professional, transparent manner.

If a staff member 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 in line with the procedures set out in our child protection/safeguarding policy.

6. Communication and social media

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should 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.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the school without their consent.

Staff should be aware of their respective school's online safety and/or associated IT policies.

7. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will not use technology in school or belonging to the 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.

Under the Obscene Publications Act 1959 an employee may have criminal liability if an individual publishes material that could corrupt or deprave the persons likely to see the material. This includes the transmission of data stored electronically.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures or videos of pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances. For example, an exceptional circumstance may arise when pictures/videos are taken to showcase a pupil's performance. In these exceptional circumstances the pictures/videos should be uploaded to the school's network at the very earliest opportunity and then deleted from the personal device, ensuring that it has also been deleted from any cloud system on the personal device. In our early years settings personal devices must not be used in any circumstances.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

Staff should be aware of their respective school's acceptable use of IT and/or associated IT policies.

Staff should also familiarise themselves with the Trust's AI policy and adhere to it, in particular ensuring no personal data is entered into AI engines.

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Trust, 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
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Written records and correspondence should be kept securely at all times.

Information relating to staff/pupils/public must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to unauthorised persons.

Information relating to pupils/public must not be given over the telephone unless the caller has given details of their right to ask for such information. Employees should check on the caller's right to information by obtaining their telephone number and calling back to check their identity or by asking for a written request for information.

Confidential matters relating to staff/pupils/public should not be discussed in areas where they may be heard by passers-by, i.e. corridors, reception, staff room, etc.

Any breach of confidentiality may be regarded as misconduct and be subject to disciplinary action.

As a general rule employees should not make statements or write letters to the media, if in doubt they should refer such matters to their Headteacher or CEO.

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/safeguarding policy.

9. 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 must 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 school is correct. This should include:

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

10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner. Outfits will not be overly revealing.

We ask that tattoos that may cause offence to certain members of the community are covered up.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Where issued, uniforms, work wear, ID badges, protective equipment or high visibility clothing must be worn at all relevant times.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring 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 on social media or in any other forum.

12. Additional activities

For the purposes of the Working Time Regulations staff who have more than one employment (either inside or outside the School) should seek their Headteacher's approval. This should be reviewed annually. Before undertaking another job, staff must also inform their Headteacher of other work undertaken so that the total level of work undertaken can be monitored. Headteachers should also find out if prospective staff have secondary employment that may prevent them from performing their job with the School to the standards desired. For staff working in the Trust Team the CEO's approval should be obtained.

The policy does not bar all outside work, however, all staff must be clear about their contractual obligations and must not take outside employment that conflicts with either the Trust's/School's interests or damages the Trust's/School's interests or reputation.

13. Conflict of interest

All staff should ensure before they undertake additional employment that there is no conflict of interest with their duties or with the Trust's/School's interests.

The public expects transparency and accountability in how decisions are made. The Trust expects its staff to give the highest possible standard of service and to avoid any situation where private and Trust/School interests may conflict. Staff who believe that they are in a situation that may cause a conflict of interest should discuss their situation with their Headteacher (or CEO if a member of the Central Trust Team).

Where this is not declared and there is a clear conflict of interest this may be considered misconduct. Where there is a financial/other benefit to the member of staff it may be seen as gross misconduct. Where there is a likelihood of dismissal for inappropriate personal interest, it is the responsibility of the Trust to demonstrate that there is a genuine financial/other risk in continuing to employ the member of staff in the same capacity. An investigation will be necessary before beginning such a course of action. Below are further examples of what constitutes personal interest:

- Members of staff must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all parents, pupils, suppliers, contractors and no part of the local community should be discriminated against.
- Members of staff who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- Members of staff, who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a private or domestic relationship with them, must declare that relationship to their manager.

Members of staff must also declare an interest where:

- A member of staff has membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct.
- A member of staff allocates school places to an acquaintance or relative

14. Relationships

Whilst personal relationships between staff are not prohibited, it is expected that any such relationship remains professional whilst on school premises and public displays of affection are not exhibited in front of pupils or other members of staff.

15. Appointment and management of staff

Members of staff involved in the recruitment of internal and external staff must ensure that the decision to appoint is based on merit, (see the Safer Recruitment Policy). An appointment that is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the job may leave the Trust vulnerable to allegations of discrimination. Members of staff must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship with them.

For the purposes of this policy the definitions of partners/relatives are ongoing personal and emotional relationships, marriage and close family members. Previous relationships must also be declared at the start of the recruitment process where you will have any decision-making power or line management responsibility.

It is the policy of the Trust that spouses/partners will not be employed where there will be a line management relationship between them relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments and/or where they will be employed together in the area of contracts or finance. This will ensure that our parents and staff feel confident that decisions within the Trust are made in a fair and equitable way based on the reasonable application of professional judgement. Equally line managers and supervisors will want to ensure that their decisions are not influenced by personal considerations. The requirement of line managers to maintain confidentiality may also put strains on personal relationships.

The responsibility of line managers is to investigate the situation and discuss the issues with the members of staff concerned. Where there is evidence that the working relationship will cause a conflict of interest i.e. where the service involves financial and/or contract work the manager will look for an alternative post for one of the staff involved. The decision of who should move to an alternative post will be based on the degree of impact the loss of either member of staff would have on the particular service. Each case will be decided on its merits to ensure that the decision made is on objective and reasonable grounds and not unfairly discriminatory.

There may be the opportunity to retain both members of staff in the same area if another manager can take on the line management element of the role in the same department or if the work can be re-arranged. A decision can only be made once a full investigation has taken place and the staff have had an opportunity to express their views. Where there is no alternative post or way of working, this may result in dismissal for "some other substantial reason". Managers will ensure that the decision to redeploy or dismiss is fair and based on measurable criteria. A full investigation will be undertaken before a decision is made. Dismissal is not automatic all other avenues must first be explored.

16. Absence from work

All leave should be approved prior to it being taken. This includes parental leave, special leave, etc. Failure to notify absence is unauthorised absence and may as such be unpaid. Failure to notify absence from work may also result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

17. Poor timekeeping

Headteachers and line managers will set a timekeeping standard that is known to all staff. This standard will be applied consistently with staff arriving and departing from their place of work at the agreed times.

Members of staff must inform their managers/colleagues of their whereabouts and expected time of return when they are out of school e.g. off-site meetings/visits etc.

18. Negligence

Negligence arises from failure by members of staff to exercise reasonable care in their work. Members of staff must not cause loss or damage through carelessness, negligence, a reckless act or breach of instructions. It will only be a disciplinary offence if the individual is considered to be personally responsible.

19. Refusal to obey a reasonable instruction

It is the responsibility of all staff to carry out reasonable instructions. In those circumstances where a member of staff refuses to obey a reasonable instruction, it will be necessary to investigate the situation and

depending on the outcome of an investigation it may result in disciplinary action. See the Whistleblowing Policy, where refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction is linked to a matter of conscience.

20. Derogatory statements

In the event of staff making any derogatory or defamatory statements regarding the Trust, any school within the trust, any member of staff or any pupils, including on any social media platform, while in the service of the Trust, disciplinary action may be taken for gross misconduct. Any such statements made after terminating their employment with the Trust may result in further legal action. Staff must be aware that when using social media they should observe this policy.

21. Use of private vehicles

Staff using private vehicles for Trust or School business must ensure:

- The vehicle is road worthy and complies with Road traffic/Transport regulations.
- That the vehicle is insured for “business use”
- They are licensed to drive the vehicle
- They do not drive under the influence of drink/drugs or where there is ill health that may impair their ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- They abide by the current Road Traffic/Transport Regulations

Staff who drive any of the school’s minibuses are required to comply with any accompanying minibus policy or procedure.

22. Alcohol/drugs

Staff must ensure that they are not unfit for duty as a result of the effects of alcohol or drugs. Staff should be aware of the lasting effects of alcohol and drugs both prescription and illegal, and ensure that any consumption of these substances does not impair their ability to discharge their duties.

23. Smoking/vaping

All schools within the Trust operate a strict no smoking policy on their sites. This includes vapes.

If staff leave the school site to smoke/vape we ask that you are considerate of our neighbours and make sure all rubbish is placed in appropriate bins.

24. Health and safety

Staff have a duty to familiarise themselves with all the safety regulations that apply to their job and the area in which they work. Please refer to the health and safety policy.

In the case of a fire, staff are asked to prioritise the exit of themselves and pupils rather than tackling a fire. Staff should use only fire extinguishers if they are needed to enable a safe exit.

25. Fraud and corruption

A member of staff who commits a fraudulent act is liable to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal and possible criminal prosecution even for a first offence. Fraud is defined as any manipulation of an accounting system or supply system to enable public money or material to be misappropriated.

Members of staff involved in the investigation of alleged fraud may be required to sign an additional code of conduct relating to their specific duties.

26. Private use of official facilities

Staff are not to use official stationery for private purposes and must not carry out private correspondence during working time. Staff are allowed to make private essential telephone calls that cannot be made outside working hours but this privilege must not be abused and the duration of all calls must be kept to a minimum.

Staff must obtain prior approval from their manager to borrow Trust/School property for use to work at home, e.g. laptop computer, printer, etc. When removing such property from the building they may be asked to show evidence of their manager's consent.

27. Reporting of arrests, Prosecutions etc

Staff must report to their Headteacher (or CEO if the member of staff is in the Central Trust Team or is a Headteacher) details of any arrest, criminal conviction or caution made against them by the Police (except for minor traffic offences, i.e. where they do not mean imprisonment or suspension of their driving licence, where the offence is also a breach of discipline and/or may have a direct impact on the member of staff's job, or where it calls into question their suitability to work with children. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

If you drive the school minibus, any points on your licence or driving arrests, prosecutions and convictions should be reported to your Headteacher.

28. False statements and claiming overtime, expenses & mileage

Staff must not make any false statement e.g. on subsistence/mileage claims, etc. Where there is evidence of a member of staff submitting such claims, they will be liable to disciplinary action and/or prosecution under the Theft Act 1968.

Where a member of staff has witnessed misconduct i.e. a fraudulent activity; they have a duty to report such an incident. See also – the Whistleblowing Policy.

Staff claiming overtime, expenses and business mileage must submit their claim on Edupay within 2 months of incurring the expense. The claim must be supported with sufficient details to enable a line manager to approve the overtime, expenses or business mileage. A receipt, invoice or similar will be required for all expense claims. Please note that the trust reserves the right not to reimburse claims where they are not submitted in time, with sufficient details and accompanied by a receipt (if required), unless there is an exceptional reason which is agreed by either your Headteacher or our CFOO.

29. Discrimination

It is the Trust's policy that all current and prospective employees/members of staff will have equal opportunity for employment, promotion and training on the basis of relevant ability, qualifications and merit. Staff must not unfairly discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

All job applicants and workers are treated equally and the Trust is willing to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate for disabled applicants and workers.

30. Harassment/bullying

The Trust seeks to provide an environment for all employees, members of staff, contractors and temporary workers free from harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of staff who is found to have committed a deliberate or unlawful act of discrimination, sexual or racial harassment or bullying. See the anti-bullying & anti-harassment and equalities policies.

31. Equality Act 2010

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for staff with protected characteristics as part of our commitment to meet the public sector equality duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. If you feel you have or may be negatively impacted by this policy please contact us.

32. Trust and School policies

Staff must read, adhere to and follow Trust and/or School policies, procedures and risk assessments.

33. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed triennially, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the People & Pay Committee.

Our Local Governing Committees and Headteachers 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.

34. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Staff grievance procedures
- Child protection/safeguarding
- Prevent

- Safer recruitment
- Gifts, hospitality and anti-bribery
- Online safety/acceptable use/IT internet use
- Whistleblowing
- Equalities
- Data protection
- Anti-bullying & anti-harassment
- Promoting wellbeing and managing absence
- Health and safety