



East Midlands
Education Trust

Employee Code of Conduct

Autumn 2023

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Trustees have adopted the policy set out in this document to provide a clear framework for the exercise of its powers and discretions in relation to all staff employed in the Trust.
- 1.2 This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with the EMET Disciplinary Procedures.
- 1.3 Part of the responsibilities of an Ofsted Inspection is to assure safe and secure provision for children, young people and learners across all remits through effective inspection and regulation. Safeguarding the welfare of children is part of Ofsted's core business for all staff, who are expected to be aware of their responsibilities in this regard. A code of conduct is essential to inform staff of the required expectations of them.
- 1.4 In accordance with the requirements of the DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance, this code has been adopted by the Trust in order for all staff to be fully aware of the standards of personal and professional conduct in relation to various aspects of their work. The code gives a clear framework for staff to know their responsibilities and will be discussed during the course of their employment, for example in team meetings and as queries arise, to ensure the code is mutually monitored, positively promoted in schools and understood by everyone.
- 1.5 Every member of staff will be asked to read this code of conduct as part of their induction. This code will be reviewed regularly and updated by the Trustees as and when necessary and staff will be informed of any amendments. If staff have any questions about the requirements of this code, advice should be sought from their line manager or the Head Teacher.
- 1.6 There is an expectation that all EMET employees will conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with the highest standard, in order to maintain public trust and confidence and be beyond reproach in the performance of their duties.
- 1.7 Each member of staff has a duty to ensure that the appropriate standards of conduct are upheld both by themselves and by colleagues.

2 Underlying principles

- 2.1 All staff must act within the law whilst undertaking their official duties. Staff must not undermine fundamental values, including democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 2.2 Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities. Where staff are members of professional bodies, they must also comply with any standards of conduct which are set by that body. The conduct of all teachers must always be in line with the EMET Teacher's Standards and where appropriate the Leadership Standards.
- 2.3 Staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the Trust and their individual schools, and maintain high standards in their own conduct, performance, attendance and punctuality. Staff should ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law or

the policies and procedures of the school. Staff should always show respect for the rights of others.

- 2.4 Staff are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service. Where staff are aware of any contraventions of this Code, illegality, misconduct or breach of procedure they should notify their Head Teacher. In the case of misconduct by a Head Teacher, their Chair of Governors should be notified and any case of misconduct by the CEO should be raised with the Chair of Trustees.
- 2.5 The Code does not seek to address every possible circumstance, and simply because a particular action may not be addressed within the Code, this does not condone that action by omission.

3 Safeguarding

- 3.1 Staff must safeguard children's well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions, the local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and their school's child protection policy. Staff must report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead person in school and ensure the Head Teacher is also informed. All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed.
- 3.2 All staff must be fully aware of their school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and, given their position of trust, must ensure that they do not put themselves in any situation where their conduct or behaviour with any pupil could be misconstrued. Any allegations of inappropriate contact with pupils will be investigated according to the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 3.3 If a child reports any safeguarding concerns to any member of staff, this must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or Head Teacher. Staff must not promise confidentiality to a child and always ensure that any actions they take are in the interests of the child.
- 3.4 Where staff have any safeguarding concerns about another member of staff these concerns must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead and Head Teacher. Serious case reviews from past cases in the media have highlighted the concerns about school staff not sharing their knowledge with the leadership of the school. This includes any low level concerns. For more information on reporting safeguarding concerns and reporting low level concerns, please see the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- 3.5 All staff must be aware that it is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended) for anyone to engage in a sexual relationship or grooming for such a relationship with a child aged under 18 with whom they are in a position of trust. It is vital that staff work within appropriate professional boundaries at all times with children and young people with whom they are in a position of trust. If staff are unsure about what action to take or how they should respond to any situation they must immediately contact the designated safeguarding lead or Head Teacher. Any concerns about an inappropriate relationship between a member of staff and a student (irrespective of their age) will be fully investigated under the Disciplinary Procedure as a potential issue of gross misconduct.

3.6 Staff who fail to raise any concerns of a safeguarding nature with the designated safeguarding lead or Head Teacher will be investigated under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

4 Behaviour that Indicates that an Individual may not be Suitable to Work with Children

4.1 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance (KCSIE) now requires **all** behaviour to be considered when determining whether an individual is suitable to work with children.

4.2 Staff, agency workers and volunteers need to be aware that the behaviour assessment includes situations both in and outside of work, whether or not children are involved. If there is a determination that a situation is of a serious nature, this may have an impact on the individual's suitability to work with children.

4.3 Staff, agency workers and volunteers should conduct themselves at all times, both inside and outside of work, in a way that does not bring their suitability to work with children into question.

4.4 If anyone is aware of an incident taking place, they must report this immediately to their Head Teacher or designated safeguarding lead.

4.5 Where allegations of inappropriate behaviour are made, these will be fully investigated under the Disciplinary Procedure, and may be referred to the Teacher Agency, DBS or other appropriate professional body, as required. Please see the Disciplinary Procedure for more information.

5 Equality issues

5.1 Staff must ensure that equality policies in relation to employment and their duties and responsibilities are adhered to. The Trust believes in equality and will not tolerate any harassment, intimidation, unfair discrimination or victimisation, by staff against pupils, colleagues, parents, governors or other visitors. Staff should not by their manner or speech be discriminatory with regards to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

6 Health and safety

6.1 It is the responsibility of all staff, governors and visitors to the school to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others and to assist in the creation of a safe work environment.

6.2 Staff have a responsibility to inform the Head Teacher of any medical condition or illness they have during the course of their employment which may impact on their fitness to undertake their duties, or on the health and safety of themselves, pupils, other staff, or governors of the school.

7 Relationships and contact between school staff and the public, parents and pupils

- 7.1 Staff should always act in a courteous, efficient and impartial manner towards all individual pupils, groups of pupils, staff and individuals. Staff must always treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, observing proper boundaries appropriate to their position.
- 7.2 Staff should also refer to the Trust policy 'Contact between staff and pupils outside the usual work context' which must be read in conjunction with this code.
- 7.3 It is the policy of the trust that there will be no personal contact other than in certain exempted circumstances between staff and current or former pupils of school age outside the normal school environment. Any proposed work related contact outside of the normal working environment, must be agreed in advance by the Head Teacher, be recorded and monitored. Unexpected contact with pupils should be kept to a minimum e.g. brief greeting. Any transport of pupils must be agreed in line with the school policy and always agreed with the Head Teacher.
- 7.4 Correspondence received by a member of staff from former pupils, the public or parents should always be discussed with their line manager or Head Teacher and filed with any response in the appropriate school records system.
- 7.5 Staff should be extremely cautious when using social media or networking sites outside of work and avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any material, including comments or images that could damage their professional reputation and/or bring their school or the Trust into disrepute. Where staff do use social media or networking sites, profiles should be set as 'private' and under no circumstances should staff allow access to pupils, their families or carers.
- 7.6 Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home address or email address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed in advance with their Head Teacher. Where this is the case, correspondence should be kept to a minimum and be professional at all times in accordance with the ethos of this code.
- 7.7 Where former pupils who are under the age of 18 and still in receipt of education in whatever educational setting make contact with a member of staff, staff must refer to the 'Contact between Staff and Pupils outside the usual work context' policy and discuss their response to any such contact with their current line manager or Head Teacher.

8 Confidentiality

- 8.1 Staff and governors should be mindful that requirements in relation to maintaining the confidentiality of pupils, their families, colleagues and any matters relating to the school itself apply to all forms of communication, including social media and networking sites.

9 Use of personal mobile phones, laptops and tablets

- 9.1 Such equipment is not to be used for personal reasons during contact with pupils.
- 9.2 If there is a requirement in the member of staff's role to take photographs of children for school purposes this must be carried out using school equipment. Any photographs taken in school remain the property of the school and will only be used for official school business such as displays, the school web site or newsletters. No images taken within the school premises should be published unofficially by individuals on social media or other such forums.

10 Use of school premises or facilities for work not connected with the school

- 10.1 Staff must not use the school's premises or facilities for activities which are not connected with their employment, without agreement from the Head Teacher. This includes the personal use of the school email, telephones, computers, photocopiers, or other equipment.
- 10.2 Internal email systems and school computer equipment should always be used in accordance with the appropriate school policies.

11 Disclosure of information

- 11.1 Staff must not disclose information given to them in confidence without consent except for that relating to safeguarding of a child which must be passed on. Advice should always be sought from their line manager or Head Teacher on the appropriate use of school data and disclosure of school information.
- 11.2 Any actions taken by schools must always be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1984, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Staff should not use confidential information obtained in the course of their employment for personal use, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it for unauthorised purposes.

12 Staff facing criminal charges

- 12.1 Any member of staff, volunteer or governor who, during the course of their employment or duties with the Trust, faces criminal charges or who receives a new caution or conviction must inform their line manager, or in the case of the Head Teacher, the chair of governors and chair of Trustees.

13 Conflict of interest

- 13.1 Staff should declare any personal interest that could bring about conflict with the Trust's or their school's interests. Staff must declare to their Head Teacher any financial interests or non-financial interests which could be perceived to conflict with their role. In the case of the

Head Teacher, any interests of this type should be declared to their Chair of Governors and the CEO.

- 13.2 Staff are required not to take outside employment which conflicts with the Trust's or their school's interests. Any staff intending to work for outside organisations should seek permission from their Head Teacher, as appropriate. In the case of the Head Teacher, permission should be sought from their Chair of Governors and the CEO.

14 Acceptance of gifts

- 14.1 It is reasonable for members of staff to accept modest gifts from pupils, especially at the end of a school year or at Christmas. Staff, if they give gifts, should ensure they are proportionate to the occasion and modest in nature. Typically, these might be small rewards to recognise excellent work or effort. Gifts of a more substantial nature should only be given through official school prize events.

15 Dress code

- 15.1 EMET policy on the matter of staff dress and appearance has been adopted from a DfE's document entitled 'guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings'. It states:

"A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work. Adults who work with pupils should ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations. This means that adults should wear clothing which:

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

- 15.2 Given the expectations we place on our students and the importance that all staff reinforce our expectations, it is important that we should be clear in what we mean when we say staff should "dress in ways which are appropriate to their role".

- 15.3 The uniform requirements of students often restrict certain types of garments and materials. Further restrictions may relate to jewellery, hair colour and hair styles and footwear. Staff should present themselves in a manner which is reflective and sympathetic to these expectations yet appropriate to their working environment. Staff should therefore familiarise themselves with their own school's uniform requirements. PE staff and site staff should wear the corporate clothing, if it is provided.

- 15.4 In accordance with DfE guidance, EMET does not permit the wearing of a face veil such as the niqab in school as this can inhibit communication with children and adults.

16 Whistleblowing

- 16.1 Trustees recognise that a member of staff may be the first to realise if something is wrong within their school or elsewhere within the Trust. However, they may not want to express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would somehow be disloyal to their colleagues or to the school.
- 16.2 The member of staff might also fear some form of harassment or victimisation as a result of raising concerns and because of this may feel it easier to ignore their concerns rather than report something which may turn out to be just a suspicion of malpractice.
- 16.3 It is important for staff to know that EMET is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. Part of meeting that commitment is to encourage employees and others with concerns about any aspect of the Trust's or their school's work to feel able to come forward and voice those concerns. The Trust recognises the need for confidentiality and that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 16.4 For more information, please see the Trust's Whistleblowing policy.

17 Other areas of concern

- 17.1 The above sections of this policy are not exhaustive and there may be other instances that occur in school life that will need referral to the Head Teacher or governing body. Further advice can be sought from the HR Business Partners.