

# Code of Conduct



Approved: 28 March 2018  
Review date: March 2021  
Responsible Officer: HR Director

## Vision and Ethos



The vision statement of the Trust demonstrates its Christian ethos and faith foundation.

The Trust believes in the transformational power of education for each individual and that this is enhanced through collaborative working between the academies.

### **We believe:**

- that a Christian ethos underpins and informs all that we do
- that the focus of the Trust is to promote collaboration between schools within a strategic locality in order to secure mutual improvement
- that through managed collaboration between academies there will be increased and improved opportunities for the development of all staff, students/children, parents and community
- in the development of a broad and balanced curriculum that supports young people's personal development and preparation for life
- that the family of academies within the Trust, working together, will secure continuity and progression for all
- that there should be high expectation for all children/students and young people whatever their circumstances or starting point and addressing disadvantage
- that, through its structures and work, the Trust can create and support effective Governance for all members
- that, through the Trust's work across its academies, expertise and capacity will be developed so that they can be supported with their development needs and economies of scale achieved

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Where the word 'Trust' is used in this document it refers to Archway Learning Trust.

Where the term 'Governing Body' is used it refers to the Local Governing Body of an individual academy within the Trust.

Where appropriate the Local Governing Bodies of individual academies will publish details of the procedures and practices to implement Trust policies.

Unless otherwise stated, 'staff' should be taken to include Trustees, governors and volunteers.

### **Related Policies and Procedures**

- Behaviour Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Data Protection and FOI Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Finance Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy and guidance
- Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sex and Relationships Policy

In relation to this Code of Conduct it is particularly important that the above policies and procedures are carefully read and adhered to.

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1. Archway Learning Trust is committed to ensuring the highest standards of professional conduct which reflect the Trust's vision and ethos and enable students and adults to work in a professional, safe and supportive environment.

## **2. Scope and Principles**

- 2.1. This Code of Conduct ('the Code') sets out the professional standards expected and the duty upon staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers to abide by it. All staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers have a duty to act as a professional role model to students and to keep them safe, promote their welfare and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students and behaviour by adults which demonstrate; integrity, maturity and good judgement. Following this Code will help to safeguard staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to students and the required professional standards of conduct.
- 2.2. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must feel able to raise issues of concern and everyone must fully recognise the duty to do so particularly in terms of child protection. Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to the designated member of staff in their academy in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and local academy practice. Anyone who has concerns must report those concerns without delay, following the procedure set out within their academy. A member of staff who, in good faith, "whistleblows" or makes a public interest disclosure will have the protection of the relevant legislation and framework set out in the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 2.3. This Code cannot provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff, Trustees, governors or volunteers. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the required professional standards. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff, Trustees, governors or volunteers have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the student or to deal with a particular situation where no specific guidance has been given. Adults are expected to make responsible and informed judgements about their own behaviour in order to ensure their conduct is of the required professional standards and secures the best interests and welfare of the students within the Trust where applicable.
- 2.4. Any member of staff who is found to have committed a breach of this Code will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. Any Trustee, governor or volunteer found to have committed a breach of this Code will be subject to a review of the viability of their role. The Board of Trustees will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this Code.

- 2.5. The Board of Trustees will follow the appropriate Trust policies and procedures and the relevant statutory guidance where it is alleged that a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

### **3. Expected Professional Standards**

- 3.1. All staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must ensure that their conduct and interactions with students, colleagues and other stakeholders are professional and in keeping with developing and maintaining constructive and positive working relationships. This expectation is applicable to all areas of their work including whilst working off Trust premises, such as when on a school trip or representing the Trust externally.
- 3.2. All staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers as appropriate to the role and/or job description of the individual, must:
- a. place the well-being and learning of students and service delivery at the centre of their professional practice;
  - b. treat students, colleagues and stakeholders fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality;
  - c. model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in students and those which are in line with the Trust Vision and Ethos, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people;
  - d. respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of students, colleagues and stakeholders, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in students' education;
  - e. seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and well-being in and out of school;
  - f. work in a positive and collaborative manner with colleagues and stakeholders, reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues;
  - g. always apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity;
  - h. have high expectations for all students and, as appropriate to role, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help students progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances;
- 3.3. Teachers are required to comply with the Teachers' Standards in force 1 September 2012, in particular Part 2 Personal and Professional Standards.
- 3.4. All staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must be familiar with and act in accordance with the relevant *Keeping Children Safe in Education* DfE statutory guidance.

#### **4. Data and Confidentiality**

- 4.1. As data controllers, all academies are subject to legislation and statutory requirements in relation to the type of data which is processed and way in which it is handled, stored, shared and manipulated. In addition, teachers owe a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their students.
- 4.2. Members of staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers may have access to confidential information about students or staff in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances the information may be sensitive and/or confidential. Data should be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection and FOI Policy and the principles of the relevant data protection legislation. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass students or staff.

#### **5. Propriety, Behaviour and Appearance**

- 5.1. All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour or actions, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting or bring the Trust into disrepute. The misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must ensure they are dressed in ways which are appropriate to their professional role and working environment and in line with the expectations the Trust has of students. Their dress and appearance must not be such that it is likely to be viewed as unprofessional, offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding. It should be culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. Those who dress or appear in a manner which may be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct.

#### **6. Professional Boundaries and Sexual Contact with Children and Young People and Abuse of Trust**

- 6.1. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students and young people. They should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted as inappropriate by others and should report any incident with this potential.
- 6.2. A relationship between an adult and a child or young person is not a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people. Any sexual behaviour or activity, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer with or towards a child or young person is illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child or young person under 18 years, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

- 6.3. Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as causing a child or young person to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of indecent images of children. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".
- 6.4. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must not have sexual relationships with students, have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative, i.e verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, electronic mail, phone calls, social networking contact or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or young person or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.
- 6.5. There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person, and manipulate that relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a student has the potential to be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is a criminal offence.

## **7. Infatuations and Crushes**

- 7.1. A child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. A member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with him/herself or a colleague, must report this without delay to a member of the Senior Leadership Team so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment to the student and so that appropriate support and guidance can be offered to the staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer. The situation will be taken seriously and the adult should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the student. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.
- 7.2. Examples of situations which must be reported are given below:
- where a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer is concerned that he or she might be developing a relationship with a student which could have the potential to represent an abuse of trust;
  - where a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer is concerned that a student is becoming attracted to him or her or that there is a developing attachment or dependency;
  - where a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer is concerned that actions or words have been misunderstood or misconstrued by a student such that an abuse of trust might be wrongly suspected by others;
  - where a member of staff, Trustee, governor or volunteer is concerned about the apparent development of a relationship by another member of staff or volunteer, or receives information about such a relationship.

## **8. Gifts**

- 8.1. It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable subject to the provisions of the Trust's Finance Policy. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.
- 8.2. Personal gifts must not be given to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a student should be consistent with the Trust's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

## **9. Physical Contact and Personal Privacy**

- 9.1. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, culture and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different student.
- 9.2. Physical contact should never be secretive or casual, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff or volunteer believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to the Senior Leadership Team and, if appropriate, a record placed on the student's file. Staff should seek further guidance from a senior manager where necessary.
- 9.3. Physical contact, which occurs regularly with a student or students, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open academy procedure and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the student's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the student's reaction or feelings and so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the student for the minimum time necessary.
- 9.4. There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.5. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.
- 9.6. Some staff, for example, those who teach PE or who provide music tuition, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support a student so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the

activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

- 9.7. Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 9.8. Staff with a job description which includes intimate care duties will have appropriate training and written guidance. No other member of staff or volunteer should be involved in intimate care duties except in an emergency.

## **10. Behaviour Management and Physical Intervention**

- 10.1. All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff and volunteers must not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation. Deliberately intimidating students by shouting aggressively, hectoring or overbearing physical presence is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be consistent with each academy's procedure.
- 10.2. Physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. The Trust will provide training to relevant individuals on the use of physical intervention. Please refer to the Trust's Behaviour Policy and local academy procedures for further guidance.

## **11. One-to-One Situations and Meetings with Students**

- 11.1. One-to-one situations have the potential to make children/young person more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one-to-one settings with students may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Staff must recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote or secluded areas of the Trust and to ensure that the door of the room is left open and/or visual/auditory contact with others is maintained. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 11.2. Pre-arranged meetings with students away from the Trust premises or on the Trust site when the Trust is not in session are not permitted unless written approval is obtained from their parent/ guardian and the Principal or senior colleague with delegated authority.
- 11.3. No child or young person should be in or invited into, the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been established and agreed with parents/carers and the Principal or colleague with delegated authority.

## **12. Unacceptable Use of ICT Facilities and Monitoring**

- 12.1. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers must ensure that they use ICT both inside and outside the workplace in a safe and responsible manner and in such a way that it does not bring the organisation into disrepute and/or damage public confidence in the Trust's ability to provide a safe and appropriate environment for students and colleagues. This includes the wider use of technology, including but not limited to, mobile devices and applications, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- 12.2. Please refer to the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and guidance for further information.

## **13. Social Contact and Social Networking**

- 13.1. Staff, Trustees, governors and volunteers are responsible for all content published from their personal social and gaming media platforms and should ensure that their online profiles and use of social and gaming media are consistent with their professional responsibilities. They should not post material which pertains to their role with the Trust, damages the reputation of the Trust or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Please refer to the Trust's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and guidance for further information.

## **14. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts**

- 14.1. Please refer to the Trust's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy and guidance on the use of images and the applicable consent forms.

## **15. Reporting Concerns and Breaches of this Code**

- 15.1. The Trust operates a zero tolerance approach in relation to conduct which is not in line with the expectations of this code and is committed to dealing with such conduct swiftly and appropriately.
- 15.2. Staff, Trustees, governors or volunteers who believe they have witnessed or become aware of any alleged breaches of this code should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy and alert their line manager. Where a concern relates to their line manager, this should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal it should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and if the concern relates to the CEO it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If a matter concerns child protection it should also be reported to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 15.3. If staff, Trustees, governors or volunteers believe they have been subject to behaviour which constitutes bullying and harassment they should refer to the Bullying and Harassment Policy and seek guidance from their trade union representative, if applicable.