

PIONEER ACADEMIES COMMUNITY TRUST

Policies and Procedures

Employee Code of Conduct

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

The trust is required to establish procedures for the regulation of staff conduct under regulation 7 of [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#). It is also expected that, in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, the trust has a staff code of conduct which covers acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.

This policy aims to set out and maintain standards of conduct that all staff are expected to follow. These standards will help ensure 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](#). All members of staff in our academies have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

The trust expects that all teachers will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards. It is expected that all support staff, governors and volunteers will also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

It is the responsibility of employees to read and abide by the code of conduct. If any of the provisions contained within this code of conduct, related codes of practice or security policies are not fully understood employees must, in their own interests, seek clarification from their headteacher or line manager.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken.

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 academies and pupils.

1. General obligations

Although the standards of conduct are specific to members of the teaching staff the trustees believe the core values and requirements apply to all members of staff – teaching and non-teaching. Therefore ALL staff are expected to behave in line with following values.

- 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

2. 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 the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

The safeguarding policy is available via the trust website or the academy offices. New staff will also be given a copy as part of their induction.

2.1 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 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
- Using inappropriate language

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 and 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 and safeguarding policy. This is available on the website or from the academy office.

3. Public Duty, Private Interest, Fraud and Theft

a. General

- An employee's duties and private interests must not conflict. Employees must declare any private interests relating to their employment duties.
- Employees must not behave in a way that could place pupils, their colleagues, or themselves at risk, and must have regard to the duty of care described in the health and safety policies and act in accordance with safe systems of work and codes of practice.
- Employees must declare in writing to the headteacher, membership of any secret societies or organisations not open to the public that require formal membership and oaths of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct.

- The trustees acknowledge the responsibility they have for the administration of public funds, and emphasise to the public and employees the importance placed on probity, financial control, selflessness and honest administration. The trustees are also committed to the prevention of fraud, whether perpetrated by employees, contractors or the public. Employees must not use their position for personal gain or for the benefit of business associates, friends or family either directly or indirectly. Guidance for trustees, headteachers and managers on the conduct of enquiries into theft, fraud or corruption can be found in the Anti-Fraud Policy.
- Employees must use public funds responsibly and lawfully. They must work to ensure the trust uses its resources prudently and within the law and that the local community gets value for money. The Financial Procedures and Regulations must be observed in line with the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Defrauding and stealing (or attempting to do so) from the trust, its academies or any person or organisation in any way will not be tolerated. This includes deliberate falsification of claims, e.g. time sheets, mileage and travel/subsistence allowances with the intention of obtaining payment.
- Employees must report genuine concerns relating to potential fraud, theft or unethical behaviour to their headteacher and/or follow the procedures contained in the Whistleblowing policy.
- The trust acknowledges that employees may not find it easy to 'blow the whistle' or report irregularities and will give them full support in raising such concerns. Every effort will be made to respect an employee's request for anonymity. However, employees are expected to demonstrate accountability and to co-operate fully with any scrutiny appropriate to their position.
- There are two sides to every story and the directors will give people a fair hearing. It is possible, however, that some allegations will turn out to be mistaken. Deliberately false or malicious allegations will be treated as misconduct.

b. Financial Inducements, Gifts and Hospitality

- On no account must an employee accept a financial payment or other inducement from any person, body or organisation, e.g. contractors, developers, consultants, etc.
- As a general rule, employees must refuse any gift or hospitality offered to them or their family that may be perceived to influence their judgement. Exceptions are gifts of negligible value that are usually given to a wide range of people, e.g. pens, diaries, calendars etc. and small gifts from children. For further guidance refer to Appendix A.

c. Employee Declarations of Financial and other interests

- All employees have a statutory duty to declare any financial or other interest in any existing or proposed contract or an interest in, or association with, any organisation, services, activity or person that may cause a direct or indirect conflict of interest with their employment. Private interests preclude employees from participation in any such activities. Employees with such a conflict of interest must tell their headteacher / chair of governors in writing.
- Employees are entitled to use all of the services of the trust as appropriate but in doing so they will receive neither favour nor suffer discrimination or disadvantage. Employees must be aware at all times that members of the public expect the highest standards of fairness and equality to be upheld in the administration of services regardless of recipient.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring into question either their integrity or their motivation. At no time should they attempt to exert any pressure to obtain services because of their position or to access services other than through those channels available to members of the public. It is for these reasons they should ensure that personal interests are declared.

- Where a potential conflict of interest occurs, employees must seek advice from their line manager, headteacher or trust leadership as to the course of action they should take.
- Declarations made by employees under the provisions of this code of conduct will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. Any personal declarations made by the headteacher will be reviewed annually by the local governing body.
- The headteacher is responsible for the monitoring of employee's activities in accordance with the provisions/declarations of this code of conduct and related codes of practice.

4. Information Technology and Data Security

Employees must ensure that they follow the security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer-held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and when logging on and off. Employees must never share passwords, which may lead to unauthorised access to academy systems. Where this practice is found, employees should be aware it may lead to disciplinary action.

In respect of internet and network access, employees must comply with trust policies such as the Online Safety and Social Media policies and relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

5. Use of Academy Systems, Property and Facilities

The trust's property such as telephones, mobile phones, software, internet access, e-mail, stationery, photocopiers, word processors and other machines or tools, materials, offices, car parks and facilities, may only be used for academy business unless permission for private use is given by the headteacher, local governors or trustees. This also applies to all automatic processing equipment such as laptops, PC's, software (including computer games and data) none of which may be used for private purposes or removed from the premises without the express permission of the headteacher, in writing.

Telephone call and e-mail/internet logging systems may be used to identify usage for private purposes. Use of mobile telephones including text messaging on mobile phones provided for work use must only be used for private purposes in an emergency. Any communications systems may be monitored.

Employees must adhere to all of the specific system security measures that are currently in place or introduced in the future.

6. Secondary Employment

Any secondary employment undertaken must not conflict with the trust's interests or bring it into disrepute and must only be undertaken outside the employee's working hours.

If an employee chooses to declare secondary employment, this does not remove the right of the trustees to take disciplinary action against any employee whose secondary employment is deemed to be, or has been, detrimental to the interests or reputation of the trust or its academies.

Employees who may be serving as a governor on the local governing body, a local councillor, trade union official, a Justice of the Peace or as a member of the Territorial Army, do not constitute secondary employment as described in this Code. However, employees must declare these duties and seek time off in a reasonable and timely manner.

7. Disclosure of Information, Confidentiality and References

Employees should be fair and open when dealing with others and ensure that they have access to the information they need unless there is a good reason not to permit this.

Employees must act in accordance with, and observe, the law in handling all personal and other information. Special care must be taken in handling personal and confidential information, which must in no circumstances be inappropriately used. Employees may be personally prosecuted for offences under the Data Protection legislation. For further guidance employees are asked to refer to the Data Protection Policy.

Confidential, personal or financial information about any employee, pupil or parent/carer, must not be disclosed to any unauthorised person, or normally, to any external organisation/agency, without the express approval of the person concerned. Employees must not abuse their position by disclosing confidential information to any third party.

Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment or tenure for personal gain or benefit or to attempt to obtain personal gain, nor pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

If during the course of their employment employees are dealing with members of their family, partners, friends or business associates this must be declared to their headteacher/trust leadership. Where such contact occurs, employees must be impartial and act in a professional manner.

8. The Academy Community and Service Users

Employees must always remember their responsibilities to the users of the academy and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.

Employees are expected to be as open as possible about their actions and the work of the academy notwithstanding the needs of confidentiality.

Employees must always act in a way that preserves public confidence in the academy.

Employees have a duty at all times, to uphold the law and relevant guidance bearing in mind the public's trust placed in academy employees.

The PACT Board will not tolerate an employee's physical or emotional abuse, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of colleagues, pupils, governors, parents/carers, contractors or other members of the public. Such actions may be deemed to be misconduct or gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. For further guidance employees should refer to the Dignity at Work Policy.

Employees working with children and young people are in a particular position of great trust. Any breach of that trust, or breach of policies and procedures meant to safeguard pupils will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. This may lead to disciplinary action including the possibility of dismissal without notice.

Employees, agency staff, contract service personnel and volunteers who work with children and young people must, in their own interests read the code of conduct and must observe current legislation and the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

Any incidents involving assault, sexual offences or harassment, discrimination or victimisation against pupils, must be dealt with following the trust's child protection procedures.

Employees who witness any abusive behaviour have a duty to report it to their Headteacher, DSL, CEO or to 'blow the whistle' (refer to academy Whistleblowing policy).

9. Recruitment and other Employment Matters

In accordance with the Equalities Statement and Objectives, employees must take care that they are not open to any charge of discrimination in recruitment or employment practices, by fully adhering to the safer recruitment policy and procedures.

To avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees must not be involved in selection and appointment processes where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal or business relationship with them. They should declare an interest where there is a potential conflict of interest in such cases.

Work decisions should be objective and always based on merit. Employees must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay for any employee who is a relative, or with whom they have a close personal or business relationship. Staff governors must not be involved with matters relating to pay and should not normally be involved in any other employment matters.

If there are exceptional reasons why the above should not be complied with, or any doubt as to how to proceed, advice must be sought from the trust's HR advisor.

10. Dress and Personal Appearance

Employees act as ambassadors for the trust and its academies and must maintain a standard of dress and appearance that is appropriate or required for the workplace and to the work being undertaken. Employees must be clean and tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where particular clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes it must be worn. This includes name badges, where agreed via trust policy and consultation.

11. Health and Safety

Employees have a general and statutory responsibility to work in a healthy and safe manner and to maintain healthy and safe working environments. Employees are required at all times to observe the trust health and safety policy and procedures and operate in accordance with safe systems of work, regulations and codes of practice, and relevant Health and Safety law.

12. Criminal Convictions

The majority of jobs across the trust and its academies will be exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and details of spent and unspent convictions and cautions that are not protected will be taken into account when determining an applicant's (or existing employee's) suitability for the role.

All employees will be subject to an enhanced DBS check which will be renewed every 6 years should their employment remain unchanged. Should an offence be committed following the issue of an enhanced DBS the employee must inform the headteacher / governing board of the circumstances who will consider what if any action to take.

Employees whose work involves driving must declare any motoring offences to their headteacher / governing board.

Employees must inform their headteacher / governing board of any pending criminal proceedings against them and subsequent convictions.

13. Drugs and Alcohol

Employees must attend work in a condition to undertake their duties in a safe manner.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs impairs performance and may constitute a health and safety risk and interfere with that person's health and/or work performance. Where it is evident during working time or on school premises that a person is under the influence or has detectably taken alcohol or drugs or there is other substantial reason to believe this to be the case this will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. If the person has previously declared a substance related problem this will be dealt with under the appropriate policy.

Trustees and local governors believe that consuming alcohol during working time or on academy premises is inappropriate and may be regarded as an act of misconduct. Exceptions to this will be agreed in advance and notified to staff by the headteacher, local governors or trustees for events such as staff end of term gatherings and PTA functions.

Likewise the use of illegal substances will not be tolerated and may result in the headteacher or trust leadership reporting the matter to the police.

14. Personal Relationships at Work

It is up to each member of staff to decide whether a personal relationship exists and if so declare to their line manager, or appropriate member of the SLT, any personal relationships which may give rise to a conflict of interest or any work place advantage perceived or otherwise.

Personal relationships could affect or be perceived by others to affect, the credibility or objectivity of the role they perform within the school and we therefore have guiding principles in place for employee's to follow. PACT operates within a set of values that treat employees fairly. However, where such a personal relationship exists between two employees, there is a duty on the part of the employee's concerned that their conduct and behaviours are not called into question when performing their professional duties.

PACT has a policy for all staff to follow if they are involved in a personal relationship with another colleague. The policy does not prohibit personal relationships at work. However, the policy outlines the professional expectations placed on members of staff when such relationships exist and seeks to ensure fairness and consistency is applied in these situations, but also the steps the employer may take if the requirements of the policy are breached. The policy is also intended to protect staff so they are not open to allegations such as impropriety, bias, and abuse of authority or conflict of interest.

Employees have a duty to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the policy, as it will not be considered a defence that you were unaware of the requirements of the policy where breaches occur. See Relationships at Work Policy.

16. Social Networking and the Internet

Staff should ensure they take all due care and attention when using social media websites. This includes usage outside academy hours on personal computers/hand held devices. Any actions, comment or behaviours that undermine the reputation of the trust, staff, governors and pupils, bringing the trust and its academies into disrepute may result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal.

Staff may not use social networking sites whilst at work on the academy site – for further clarity staff should refer to the academy's E-Safety Policy and acceptable use statement.

Staff who use social networking sites outside of academy hours must not add current students to their personal social networking sites.

Staff must not use social networking sites as a means of attacking or abusing colleagues.

As per the Safeguarding Procedures and the E-Safety Policy staff must not share their personal mobile number or personal email address with students. The academy has a number of mobile phones that are available for staff use during academy trips and visits and these can be booked as part of the visit procedures through the finance office.

Policy Review

This policy will be kept under review in order to keep it in line with relevant legislation and modifications authorised by the governing board.

Appendix A

Gifts & Hospitality Policy

Introduction

The following guidelines have been produced to help you to gauge what constitutes an acceptable gift and what is deemed an appropriate level of hospitality.

The following general rules should be used to aid your decision making on accepting gifts and hospitality as an employee of PACT.

- Accepting gifts should be the **exception**. You may accept small gifts e.g. a diary, a coffee mug, box of chocolates, tin of biscuits, bunch of flowers etc. but the value of such a gift should not ordinarily exceed £25 in value. Should you accept a gift which has a value in excess of £25 you must report it to the Business Manager who will record an entry in the Register of Business Interests. This applies to gifts from parents as well as gifts from suppliers.
- Never accept a gift or hospitality from anyone who is tendering for a contract with the Academy, seeking employment with the Academy or is in dispute with the Academy.
- Where items purchased for the Academy include a free gift or offer of hospitality, these should be used for Academy business or handed to the Business Manager for use in a charity raffle.
- Working lunches with customers are generally an acceptable way of doing business provided they are not at an unreasonable level.
- If you are visiting a company to view equipment that the Academy is considering purchasing you should claim any travel expenses incurred from the Academy. Acceptance of a working lunch on such occasions may be acceptable but care should be taken to ensure that the Academy's purchasing and or/tender procedures are not compromised.
- Acceptance of sponsored hospitality that is built into the official programme at conferences/seminars related to your work area are acceptable.
- **If you are in any doubt about the acceptability of any gift or hospitality please consult the Headteacher/Business Manager.**