



# Staff Code of Conduct

2024-25

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Smith", is written over a horizontal line.

CEO SIGNATURE

n/a - delegated to CEO

CHAIR OF TRUST BOARD SIGNATURE

September 2024

DATE

Annual or on updates

NEXT REVIEW DATE



## Contents

<b>Aims, scope and principles</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Legislation and guidance</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>General obligations</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Safeguarding</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Allegations that may meet the harm threshold.....	5
Low-level concerns about members of staff .....	6
Whistleblowing .....	7
<b>Staff relationships</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Staff-pupil relationships.....	8
Relationships between staff members .....	9
Relationships between staff and parents .....	9
Physical contact .....	10
Showering and changing.....	11
Transporting pupils .....	11
<b>Financial inducements</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Communication and social media</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Acceptable use of technology</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Confidentiality and data protection</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Honesty and integrity</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Dress code</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Conduct outside of work</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Smoking, alcohol and other substances</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Health and Safety</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Declaration of interest</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Monitoring arrangements</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Links with other policies</b> .....	<b>17</b>



## **Aims, scope and principles**

St. Bartholomew's Multi Academy Trust expects all pupils to receive high-quality teaching in an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

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 all support staff, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We recognise that most staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards. All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

This document applies to staff members who are:

- Employed by the school, including the headteacher and volunteers.
- Employed in units or bases that are attached to the school.

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
- School catering staff employed by external providers.
- Employees of external contractors. These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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.

## **Legislation and guidance**

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we have a staff code of conduct, which covers low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, 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.

## 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
- Observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position, showing 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
- Have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school
- Adhere to the Teachers' Standards

## Safeguarding

In accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

In accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect



- Child-on-child abuse
- Serious violence
- FGM
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Bullying: this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Staff will have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g., abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against pupils. In accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Pupils requiring mental health support.
- Children absent from education, particularly if on repeat occasions and/or long periods of time.
- Elective Home Education (EHE).
- LAC and previously LAC.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Pupils struggling with mental health needs.
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures are available on our school websites or via the school offices.

### **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.

An investigation will be conducted in line with the appropriate policies and procedures e.g., Managing Allegations Policy.

### **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
- 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 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 safeguarding and child protection policy. This is available on the school website.

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



## Whistleblowing

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

- Pupils’ or staff’s 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

Any member of staff that has concerns about another staff member’s actions or intent or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Whistleblowing Policy immediately, so appropriate action can be taken. This includes if the staff member in question is a volunteer, supply staff or an individual using school premises to host extra-curricular activities. 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 such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the 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 governing board.

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 any details of any personal interest in the matter.

If a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue with the school, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC’s whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285 (between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday) or email address [help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:help@NSPCC.org.uk). Staff can also access guidance at [www.gov.uk/whistleblowing](http://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing). Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

Staff will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This will include training around online safety, particularly concerning the understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, in line with [filtering and monitoring standards](#). This training will be updated at least annually to continue to provide staff members with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.



Staff will recognise that, when teaching pupils about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every pupil, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for pupils who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

Staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

Staff will be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care service (CSCS) and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.

Staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe by the school. They will never give the impression that pupils are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a pupil ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Staff will know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving those who need to be involved, but will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

Staff will be aware of the school's legal duty to make a referral to the DBS where they consider an individual has engaged in contact that has harmed, or is likely to harm, a child.

For our school's detailed whistleblowing process, please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

## **Staff relationships**

### **Staff-pupil relationships**

The school expects that staff will:

- Always maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.
- Only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.





- Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

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.

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 safeguarding and child protection policy.

### **Relationships between staff members**

All employees must ensure that they maintain professionalism within the working environment. Where employees are in a romantic relationship with a colleague and/or connected to another colleague on a social basis outside of the workplace, working relationships in all school establishments should remain professional and positive. Out of work relationships should not impact on the functioning or workplace environment and employee **must** declare any relationships or personal connections to the Headteacher/Head of School (and/or CEO as appropriate to the staff role).

### **Relationships between staff and parents**

Where an employee of the Trust has a personal (including social or romantic) relationship with a parent of a child enrolled within the Trust, professionalism should be maintained at all times and the Headteacher/HOS/CEO must be notified appropriately. Employees should avoid behaviour/actions that could be misconstrued as biased towards the pupil of the parent and avoid behaviour/actions that could leave them vulnerable to allegations of a negative nature. Should the employee be directly connected or supporting the pupil of the parent that they are within a personal relationship outside of school, they should act in a manner in line with relevant policy and procedures and ensure teaching and learning is applied consistently as it would for all pupils. Employees should also



maintain confidentiality in relation to all internal Trust processes and discussions/communications and should not share information with the parent of the pupil or any other individuals. The employee should act in an impartial and neutral manner in relation to all matters relating to the parent and pupil that they have a personal relationship with.

### **Physical contact**

The school understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g., when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.

When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be considered. Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions. Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.

Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher, or the chair of governors if the concern is about the headteacher, and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will always remain self-aware of their actions and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.



Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the school's positive handling procedures.

### **Showering and changing**

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing, e.g., before and after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.

The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff will announce their intention of entering a changing room (where relevant at school swimming lessons or on residential) to allow pupils to maintain their privacy.

Staff will never change (or shower, where relevant) in the same area as pupils.

### **Transporting pupils**

When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.

Staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

### **Financial inducements**

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the school's financial regulations.
- Abide by the requirements set out in the Trust's Gifts & Hospitality Policy, a copy of which is available via the Trust's central business team.



## **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, 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 the Trust's Digital Safeguarding Policy.

## **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.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology appropriately while under their care.

Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.

The school understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.



Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.

The school reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production on school-owned equipment, principally to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Please also refer to the Digital Safeguarding Policy.

## **Confidentiality and data protection**

Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:

- Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
- Ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
- Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.

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

### **This information should never be:**

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

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

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the headteacher in writing in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.



## **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 abide by the requirements set out in the Trust's Gifts & Hospitality Policy, a copy of which is available via the school office.

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.

## **Dress code**

The Trust expects that all staff members will dress in a smart, formal, professional, appropriate manner:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school.
- Dress in a smart, professional manner that is appropriate to their role.
- Remember that they are role models for pupils and colleagues, and that their dress and appearance must reflect this.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues, or other stakeholders. Outfits will not be overly revealing or short.
- Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.
- Denim is not acceptable.

## **Conduct outside of work**

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school into



disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct or possession or use of illegal drugs.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. This is explored further in the Acceptable use of technology section of this policy.

### **Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

Staff will not smoke or vape on, or within a one-mile radius of, the school premises. Staff will not smoke or vape whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

### **Health and Safety**

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with, and adhere to, the school's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements.
- Inform the headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).



## Declaration of interest

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with could be in conflict with the ethos of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.

The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:

- Payments for services
- Equity interests
- Intellectual property rights
- Hospitality or gifts

Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school.

Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.

Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:

- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements, or hospitality
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision, or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
- Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague

Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.

Where applicable, all declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted to the Governance Professional for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.





## **Monitoring arrangements**

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the CEO and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document as part of their induction programme.

Our Trust 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.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
- Staff grievance procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Digital safeguarding
- Whistleblowing