



# Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

## All Trust Staff - Code of Conduct Policy

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**Policy Date:** October 2025

**Review Date:** October 2027

## Document History

Version	Date	Author	Summary Changes
V2	September 2022	Josh Smith (Head of HR)	Merged primary and secondary code of conduct policies. Addition of managing low-level concerns policy appendix. Addition of mobile phone policy appendix. Addition of email etiquette protocol appendix. Detailed changes available upon request <a href="mailto:josh.smith@ietrust.org">josh.smith@ietrust.org</a>
V3.3	August 2025 – November 2025	Josh Smith (Director of People and Culture)	1.4 Moved – equalities statement to beginning of document 3J – Added ‘harassment’ and ‘victimisation’ 3E – Added ‘this will be shared with all staff and new joiners’ 3 (F & M) amended – confirmed actions to be taken by the Trust 4.4 Expanded - clause regarding awareness of low-level concerns 6 Retitled – ‘Professional boundaries and relationships’ 6.3 Added – clarify that staff should not secure or strengthen relationships with pupils on social media 6.5 Amended – to strengthen clause that staff should not share personal contact information with children 6.8 and 6.9 Added – clauses around professional boundaries 7 Retitled – ‘Physical contact with students’. 7.2,7.3,7.4 & 7.5 Added – clauses around physical contact with students 8 Added – to clarify arrangements for working with students one to one 9.2 & 9.4 Added – further clarity on dress and appearance expectations for colleagues 9.3 Moved - Identity badge clause. Added ‘or wear a lanyard’ 9.7 Amended – examples of inappropriate wording provided 11 Titled - ‘alcohol and substance misuse’ 11.1 & 11.5 Added – clarity on alcohol and drugs including legal highs 11.2 Added – Alcohol on site to be locked away and out of sight 11.4 – Amended ‘GP’ to ‘Medical Practitioner’. 11.7 Added – clause regarding smoking/vaping on site 12 Retitled - ‘Gifts and Hospitality’ 13 Retitled - ‘Honesty and Personal Integrity’ Added - 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.9, 13.10 and 13.11. Further clarity on working with honesty and integrity, not undermining fundamental British values and expression of personal, religious and political beliefs in the workplace. 14 Titled - ‘conduct outside of work and at work related functions’ 14.1 Added - ‘staff should inform manager of situations outside of work which may bring the school/trust into disrepute’ 14.2 Added – clarity on conduct at work-related functions/events 14.2 Amended – reference added around dignity at work 15 Titled ‘Keeping within the Law’ 15.2 Added ‘regulation’ to ‘teaching regulation agency’ 15.3 – Amended – staff to notify trust if convicted of a crime. Clarified – being investigated or receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean employment is at risk. 15.4 Added – staff to notify trust of changes to personal details for DBS check purposes 16.1 Added – clarity on staff use of artificial intelligence (AI) 16.9 Added – clarity on staff use of wearable technology in work 16.10 Added – prohibition of location tracking devices 17 Titled ‘Curriculum

		<p>17.1 &amp; 17.2 Added – guidance and expectations around the use of sensitive subject matter in the curriculum e.g. in PSHE</p> <p>18.2 Added – ‘staff must use Trust employment reference policy’</p> <p>19 Titled ‘Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment’</p> <p>19.1, 19.2, 19.3, 19.4, 19.5 &amp; 19.6 added</p> <p>20 Titled ‘Workplace relationships’</p> <p>20.1 Added – Clarity on personal relationships among colleagues</p> <p>21.1 Amended – Declaration of secondary employment form to be completed where staff undertake work outside the Trust</p> <p>23 Titled ‘Agency Workers’</p> <p>23.1 &amp; 23.2 Added – clarity on Trust’s approach to managing complaints with Agency workers</p> <p>24 Amended – to align with updated Disciplinary Policy</p> <p>24.1.1.6 – Added ‘reasonable’</p> <p>25 Amended – ‘staff consultation committee’ with ‘joint negotiation and consultation committee (JNCC)’</p> <p><u>Appendix 1</u></p> <p>2.1.2, 4.1 &amp; 4.7 Amended - ‘allegations threshold’ to ‘harm threshold’</p> <p>2.1.3 Added – confirming stance on personal devices</p> <p>2.3 Added – low level concerns can be wider than related to safeguarding</p> <p>3.4 Amended – Further clarity on where to report low level concerns for different postholders</p> <p>3.5 Added – provided clarity on where to report concerns if there is a conflict of interest</p> <p><i>Allegations Against Staff procedure set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy - clarified this matter in several clauses.</i></p> <p>4. Amended - ‘Investigate’ with ‘Seek to establish the facts’</p> <p>4.4 Amended - low level concerns sections to clarify low-level concerns can be wider than safeguarding concerns</p> <p>4.5 Added – ‘contractors’ employer’</p> <p>4.7 Amended – ‘first part of this policy’ to ‘KCSIE’</p> <p>4.8 Added – confirmation on how low level concerns are reported on half-termly across the Trust</p> <p><u>Appendix 2</u></p> <p>5.6 – amended ‘will’ to ‘may’</p> <p><i>Due to creation and retitling of sections, some clauses have been moved under their more relevant headings.</i></p> <p><i>Job titles and clarity on line management roles added throughout document.</i></p> <p><i>Additions made throughout policy to refer staff to other Trust’s policies and procedures for further information where relevant.</i></p>
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## Contents

1	Purpose .....	5
2	Scope .....	5
3	Principles.....	5
4	Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns .....	6
5	Professional boundaries and relationships.....	7
6	Physical contact with students .....	8
7	Working one to one with students .....	9
8	Dress and Personal Appearance .....	9
9	Working Safely .....	11
10	Alcohol and substance misuse.....	11
11	Gifts and Hospitality.....	12
12	Honesty and personal integrity .....	12
13	Conduct outside of work and at work related functions .....	14
14	Keeping within the law .....	14
15	Acceptable use of technology and media.....	14
16	Curriculum .....	16
17	Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters .....	16
18	Tackling Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment.....	16
19	Workplace Relationships .....	17
20	Outside Commitments and Private Work.....	17
21	Confidentiality .....	17
22	Agency workers .....	18
23	Disciplinary action.....	18
24	Monitoring and Review of Policy.....	21
	Appendix 1 – Managing Low Level Concerns Policy.....	22

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 A Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all Trust staff are expected to observe.
- 1.2 Employees should note that this Code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct and employees must use common sense in adhering to the underpinning principles. If any employee is ever unsure what the expectations are in any given circumstance they should speak to their line manager, Headteacher or an Executive Leader.
- 1.3 This Code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4 The policy will be monitored to ensure consistency of application and adherence to equalities legislation, to ensure the policy operates in accordance with duties to promote equality, to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations between staff with protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 The Code applies to all employees regardless of length of service including those in their probationary period. It also applies to consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy) although, unlike employees, breaches of the Code will not be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.2 Staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within the Trust. As recognisable figures in their communities, the behaviour and conduct of staff of the trust outside of work can impact on their employment. Therefore, conduct outside of work may be treated as a disciplinary matter if it is considered that it is relevant to the employee's employment.
- 2.3 If an employee's actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code, then the Trust may take formal disciplinary action which may include the full range of disciplinary sanctions. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside of working hours, which bring the School or Trust into disrepute or impact on the employee's ability to carry out their role, may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken, in accordance with the Trust's procedures.

## **3 Principles**

In everyday practice the principles of this Code of Conduct mean that:

- A. Employees have a responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for children and young people within our establishment.
- B. Employees have a responsibility for their own actions and behaviour, and should avoid any conduct which would lead to their motivation and intentions to be questioned.

- C. Employees must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promoting a professional image.
- D. Employees should discuss and/or take advice promptly acting within a reasonable/agreed time period from their line manager or another appropriate senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- E. Employees should comply with statutory provisions, policies and procedures of the Trust / school. These will be shared with all staff and new joiners.
- F. Employees should know the name of their designated person for safeguarding, be familiar with safeguarding children arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students / pupils. Staff will be trained to understand their safeguarding responsibilities as well as understand the designated safeguarding lead for their setting.
- G. Employees should set an example of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students / pupils.
- H. Employees working with young people are in a position of great trust. Serious breaches of that trust; assault or sexual misconduct or deliberate disregard of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of Trust / School services may be regarded as potential gross misconduct.
- I. Employees must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language. Professional standards must always be maintained when dealing with both staff, students / pupils, parents and visiting adults equally, and with respect.
- J. Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination, victimisation harassment and bullying that students / pupils and colleagues may be subject to. Employees must not ignore any form of discrimination and must promote positive equality, diversity and inclusion at all times.
- K. Employees must comply with Health and Safety Regulations or instructions and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to by the Trust.
- L. Employees should be aware that breaches of the law, their contract or Trust policy could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
- M. If an employee does not follow this Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedures may be invoked. The Trust will deliver regular updates, take feedback from staff and ensure mandatory training will be completed.

#### **4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recognising low level concerns**

- 4.1 All employees are responsible for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. This

means that employees are required to take action to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. This will enable all children to have the best outcomes.

- 4.2 All employees should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- 4.3 All employees must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and know what action to take if these are identified.
- 4.4 All employees must be aware of low-level concerns, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or Trust may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with this code of conduct. For staff (further information in **Appendix 1 – Managing Low Level Concerns Policy**).
- 4.5 All employees must cooperate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary.
- 4.6 Employees should endeavour to minimise putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct by taking proper precautions, such as:
  - Being visible to others
  - Telling other adults where you are / what you are doing
  - Never locking doors, covering windows or using 'Do not disturb' signs when alone with students / pupils
  - Never offer lifts in a car to students / pupils, unless there is an emergency and permission has been granted by the DSL, Headteacher or Executive Leader
  - Record and report any incidents or perceived incidents immediately
  - Always avoid unnecessary contact with students / pupils, and discourage student-initiated contact
  - Contact during class activity should be restricted to what is appropriate and visible to others.
  - Avoid comforting a distressed student in an isolated area.

## **5 Professional boundaries and relationships**

- 5.1 Relationships with students / pupils must be professional at all times; physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction. The 2003 Sexual Offences Act states it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.
- 5.2 Other forms of school contact with students, such as via telephone or email, must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students. Staff and students should always use Trust / school email addresses. In the case of consortium students / pupils, staff should use their home school

email address. Staff should refer to the Trust's social media procedure for further information.

- 5.3 Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact, via any channels (including social media), with students for the purposes of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Employees should use their work provided equipment only for communicating electronically with students. If there are any circumstances in which an employee has had to provide their personal contact details, including phone numbers, email address etc, to any student then they should report this to Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.
- 5.4 Should a student / pupil contact a member of staff from a personal email account the member of staff should reply if appropriate, copy in the student's school email address and ask the student to use that address in all future correspondence. If contact is made outside of school, please advise the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) for your own protection.
- 5.5 Employees should not be sharing personal details such as home/mobile phone number, address or personal email. Employees should gain permission from their Headteacher or an Executive Leader if there is a need for them to give their personal details in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.6 If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Headteacher or Executive Leader immediately. Such examples could be related to internet social networking sites (i.e. being asked to be a 'friend' on 'Facebook')
- 5.7 Staff members should not travel alone with students unless in an emergency or where the child is at risk. In this instance the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed as soon as possible. If a staff member is using their own vehicle, it should be road worthy with the appropriate licences and insurance held. Staff should not travel alone with students in a private car, unless in an emergency or with permission from the DSL, Headteacher or Executive Leader.
- 5.8 Employees should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a student. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is completely unacceptable. Where students display difficult or challenging behaviour, employees should follow the behaviour policy using strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation.
- 5.9 Our schools are part of our communities, and we recognise that, as members of the community, employees will come into contact with students outside of the school. We expect staff to use their professional judgement in such situations and to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any contact that they have had with a student, outside of school, that they are concerned about or that could be misinterpreted by others.

## **6 Physical contact with students**

- 6.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, other than reasonable force. Examples include:

- Comforting a distressed student (discretion should be used over the level and justification)
  - When a student is praised / congratulated
  - Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument or technical equipment in a subject such as technology
  - Demonstrating how to use PE equipment or complete PE activities
  - To administer first aid
- 6.2 Employees must ensure that they only use physical contact in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and in response to the student's needs at the time. This should be of limited duration and appropriate to the age, stage of development, gender and background of the student. Employees should always be able to explain why they have made physical contact with a student. Employees should ensure that they have read and understood our Use of Reasonable Force Policy.
- 6.3 There may also be occasions where a student is in distress and needs comfort and reassurance which may include age appropriate physical contact. If an employee is in this position then they should consider the way in which they offer comfort, ensuring that it is not open to misinterpretation and is always reported to the designated safeguarding lead and formally recorded on the child protection monitoring system.
- 6.4 Staff may legally physically intervene with students to prevent them from committing a crime, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Physical force should never be used as a form of punishment.
- 6.5 Sexual contact, including grooming patterns of behaviour, with students is unlawful and unacceptable in all circumstances.

## **7 Working one to one with students**

- 7.1 There will be times where an employee is working one to one with a student and this is acceptable. Employees need to understand that this means that they may be more vulnerable to allegations being made against them. Therefore, it is important that employees:
- 7.1.1 Avoid meeting on a one to one basis in secluded areas of the school/trust;
  - 7.1.2 Ensure that the door to the room is open or that there is visual access into the room;
  - 7.1.3 Inform a colleague or line manager of the meeting, preferably beforehand; and
  - 7.1.4 Reports to their line manager if the student becomes distressed or angry.

## **8 Dress and Personal Appearance**

- 8.1 All employees act as ambassadors for the Trust and role models for the pupils/students, therefore an acceptable standard of dress and appearance is required for the workplace.

- 8.2 Our expectation is that staff are decently, appropriately and professionally dressed at work at all times. Clothing should not be excessively revealing, allow underwear to be visible, display offensive logos or writing, or be ripped or torn. During periods of hot weather, staff may wear clothing that is suitable for the temperature, which may include lighter or shorter garments such as shorts or sleeveless tops. However, clothing should still maintain a reasonable level of modesty and professionalism, and provide sufficient bodily cover so as not to be offensive or distracting. If an employee is unsure whether any item of clothing is appropriate, they should not wear it to work and are encouraged to speak to their line manager. Where clothing is deemed unacceptable, a senior leader will inform the employee in a clear and courteous manner.
- 8.3 Members of staff are issued with identity badges with a staff lanyard. All staff must wear these badges, with the lanyard provided, at all times including in the school / trust and when they represent the School / Trust externally. Where the Head Teacher or Executive Leader decides that it is not practical to wear identity badges on a lanyard, or wear a lanyard (for example, because of a health and safety risk), staff should have them available for inspection at all times.
- 8.4 Whilst at work, employees must be clean and tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes, it must be worn. .
- 8.5 While comfort is important, clothing such as sportswear and athleisure (e.g. leggings, joggers, hoodies, or gym wear) are generally not considered appropriate in a professional educational setting unless required for specific duties such as teaching physical activities. Staff are expected to dress in a manner that reflects their role as ambassadors for the Trust and role models for pupils/students. Exceptions may be made for designated dress-down days or specific roles, at the discretion of the Head Teacher or Executive Leader.
- 8.6 Employees engaged in teaching physical activities with the children are expected to wear appropriate clothing i.e. Training shoes, track suits etc. whilst undertaking this activity.
- 8.7 Denim clothing is generally not considered appropriate in a professional educational setting.
- 8.8 Within these general guidelines, clothes worn for cultural, religious or traditional reasons, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions will normally be acceptable in all but the most exceptional circumstances.
- 8.9 Employees who have tattoos must ensure that any tattoos with inappropriate wording or imagery are covered with clothing at all times. This includes tattoos that contain offensive language, sexual content, violent or extremist symbols, drug-related imagery, or anything that could reasonably be considered unprofessional or upsetting in a school environment. Employees may be asked to cover tattoos at the discretion of the Head Teacher or Executive Leader.

## **9 Working Safely**

- 9.1 It is the duty of all employees to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others who are affected by what they do or do not do. They should also ensure that they keep up to date with health and safety guidance as provided by the employer.
- 9.2 An employee should use any safety clothing and equipment provided by the employer that is needed in their role and ensure that the equipment is not misused, neglected, or damaged.
- 9.3 An employee must report any accident or "near misses" they have at work as soon as possible and accurately complete an accident report form, this includes verbal and physical assaults. There is a form on staff desktops for reporting accidents, assaults and near misses.
- 9.4 Employees must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their health and safety.

## **10 Alcohol and substance misuse**

- 10.1 Staff are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out their job and to be able to perform their duties safely without any limitations due to the use or after effects of alcohol or drugs. In this policy drug use includes the use of controlled drugs, psychoactive (or mind-altering) substances formerly known as "legal highs", and the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medication.
- 10.2 Any alcohol kept on school/Trust premises (e.g. for events or gifts) must be securely stored in a locked area, out of sight and reach of children.
- 10.3 Prescribed drugs may be taken but if a medical practitioner gives an employee any medication that may have a negative effect on their performance, they should tell their line manager, Headteacher or Head of Central Function in confidence.
- 10.4 The use of illegal substances may not only result in formal action, including the possibility of summary dismissal, but may also be reported to the police.
- 10.5 Alcohol and drug-related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. Therefore the Trust will seek, where appropriate, to treat these problems in a similar way to other health issues. Support may be provided at this point, in order to aid a full recovery, allowing a return to work/effective performance and the full range of duties.
- 10.6 Alcohol should not be consumed during the working day unless agreed beforehand by the Headteacher or Executive Leader for a specific occasion.
- 10.7 Employees must not smoke, vape, or use tobacco or nicotine products on school/Trust premises or in view of students, parents, or visitors. These activities should only take place during designated unpaid breaks and away from the school site to avoid reputational risk and uphold professional standards. This includes the use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, pipes,

cigars, and herbal alternatives.

## **11 Gifts and Hospitality**

- 11.1 An employee's actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and must not give the impression to another member of staff, parent, pupil or service user that they are influenced in this way.
- 11.2 Employees should only accept gifts of a modest and token value (i.e. less than £30).
- 11.3 Employees should not knowingly accept a gift of hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the school/Trust or may be seeking employment with the Trust. Employees should decline any offer of hospitality if they think the giver has an ulterior motive.
- 11.4 If employees accept any bribes from an individual (e.g. parent) that provides the School/Trust with goods or services, they may be guilty of corruption. Employees should inform their Head Teacher/Line Manager if anyone tries to bribe them or if there is evidence of improper behaviour by others.
- 11.5 The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. The giving of a personal gift for a specific reason is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the employee has first discussed this with their Line Manager.
- 11.6 Employees should be cautious when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

## **12 Honesty and personal integrity**

- 12.1 Employees are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of honesty and personal integrity in all aspects of their work.
- 12.2 Employees uphold public trust in our schools and MAT and should maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - 12.2.1 Treating students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position;
  - 12.2.2 Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others;
  - 12.2.3 Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
  - 12.2.4 Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- 12.3 Employees are entitled to hold personal, religious, and political beliefs. However, these must

not be expressed in ways that unreasonably impact the dignity or wellbeing of others or disrupt the professional environment. Beliefs shared in the workplace must be worthy of respect in a democratic society, and must not be extreme, discriminatory, or undermine the Trust's commitment to inclusion and mutual respect.

- 12.4 Political views should be shared with sensitivity and discretion. Employees are expected to avoid excessive or unsolicited discussion of political matters, particularly where this may cause discomfort or division among colleagues or students. All staff must remain professional and respectful in their interactions, ensuring that personal beliefs do not interfere with their ability to work collaboratively or uphold the values of the Trust.
- 12.5 To maintain a professional, inclusive, and politically neutral working and learning environment, employees must not display flags, symbols or emblems in classrooms, learning spaces or on lanyards that represent political, ideological, or organisational affiliations. This includes, but is not limited to, political party symbols, campaign materials, or any imagery that could reasonably be perceived as endorsing a particular political or ideological stance. There are circumstances where the use of flags or symbols are appropriate and educationally relevant such as:
  - 12.5.1 National flags used in the curriculum. For example, language lessons or cultural studies.
  - 12.5.2 Symbols with historical relevance and context such as the swastika when teaching World War II history, presented sensitively and for educational purposes only.
  - 12.5.3 Awareness events; for example, Pride flags during Pride Month or similar inclusion-focused initiatives approved by the school or Trust.
- 12.6 Any display must be clearly linked to curriculum content, an approved event, or a Trust-wide initiative, and should never be used to promote personal beliefs or affiliations.
- 12.7 If a school or central team employee wishes to sponsor an event or service, no employee, relative or friend should benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to, and prior approval by the Head Teacher/Head of Central Function or Line Manager.
- 12.8 Employees are required to declare to the Line Manager, any pecuniary interests which could conflict with the School's/Trust's interests, including any Directorships or equivalent position, which they may hold.
- 12.9 Deliberately giving false information on claims or reports such as mileage, travel/subsistence allowances, self-certification forms, attendance records or incident reports will be deemed as fraud. All documents/forms/records should be completed honestly.
- 12.10 Employees must comply with the requirements of statutory bodies relating to the examination, assessment and evaluation of pupil achievement and attainment. They must not alter, falsify, or add to; any examination papers, and should not provide unauthorised photocopies of forthcoming examination papers to students. If you are concerned about maladministration of any kind, please report to the Headteacher.

12.11 Employees should ensure that they use Trust funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner.

12.12 Employees must comply with any lawful or reasonable instructions issued by managers, governors or directors.

### **13 Conduct outside of work and at work related functions**

13.1 Activities/private interests/outside employment, which employees may participate in when they are not at work, must not bring the Trust or school into disrepute. Employees should not put themselves in a position which could result in public confidence in the School/Trust being weakened. Employees should make their line manager aware of any such situations that have occurred outside of the school/Trust which may bring it into disrepute.

13.2 Employees are required to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work-related functions and work-related social events that take place outside normal work hours. Staff should act in a manner that is consistent with our dignity at work policy, ensuring to treat others with dignity and respect and behave in a way which will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

### **14 Keeping within the law**

14.1 Employees have a duty at all times to uphold the law.

14.2 Teaching is a notifiable occupation, which means that the police report any conviction or caution given to a teacher to the Department for Education (DFE). Offences involving a risk of harm to children or to vulnerable adults are considered by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) All other convictions and cautions are passed to The Teaching Regulation Agency which has a role in determining if a caution or criminal offence is relevant to a teacher's registration.

14.3 An employee should inform the Headteacher, Head of Central Function or an Executive Leader immediately if they are charged with any offence, including driving offences that involve court proceedings (e.g. drink driving, dangerous driving), or if they are convicted of any crime whilst they are employed at the Trust. The appropriate manager will then consider if any follow up action is necessary and decide if the matter should be referred and considered at a disciplinary hearing. Some offences would be classed as serious and would fall under the definition of gross misconduct. Being investigated by the police, receiving a caution or being charged will not automatically mean that an employee's employment is at risk.

14.4 Employees must promptly notify the Trust of any changes to their personal details, including a change of name. This is essential to ensure accurate records and to support statutory processes such as DBS renewals and safeguarding checks.

### **15 Acceptable use of technology and media**

15.1 Employees must use artificial intelligence (AI) tools responsibly and in accordance with the Trust's policies on data protection, safeguarding, and professional conduct. AI tools may be

used to support teaching, administration, and planning, but must not be used to generate or process sensitive personal data, student records, or confidential information. Staff should ensure that any AI-generated materials are fact-checked and suitable for the educational context.

- 15.2 Employees should follow the Trust's policy and procedures on computer virus protection. A virus, which is maliciously hidden in a programme, can corrupt and damage computer files and discs. Employees need to be made aware that if they knowingly introduce a computer virus, this is not just a contravention of expected behaviour within their employment, they are breaking the law.
- 15.3 Employees should ensure that they follow the Trust's 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 logging on and off. Employees should never share a password or similar security device that may lead to unauthorised access to the Trust's systems or property.
- 15.4 Employees should gain proper prior approval from the owner of the copyright before copying computer programmes (software) and other literature for personal use as it is an offence (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988).
- 15.5 Employees should return any property or equipment which they have been allowed to borrow by the Trust as soon as they leave their job or when requested by their Line Manager.
- 15.6 Employees must exercise caution when using information technology, including social networking sites and apps, and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.
- 15.7 Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. Staff members should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have and should not have contact with students through social media or other electronic means, apart from through official school channels.
- 15.8 Photographs/stills or video footage of students should only be taken using school/Trust equipment, for purposes authorised by the Trust. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recordings or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Trust's procedures on Trust equipment. If personal cameras or video equipment is used to take photographs/stills or video footage of students/pupils approval must be sought from the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Executive Leader prior to pictures/footage being taken. Photos must then be deleted and transferred to the school network/equipment, unless by prior arrangement with the Headteacher / Executive Leader
- 15.9 Employees must not use wearable technology such as smart glasses, smart rings, or other recording-enabled devices in school settings unless explicitly authorised by the Head Teacher or Executive Leader. This is to ensure compliance with safeguarding, data protection, and privacy policies. Any approved use must be for professional or accessibility

purposes and must not involve recording or transmitting images, audio, or data without prior consent.

- 15.10 Tracking devices such as Apple AirTags or similar location-based tools must not be brought onto school/Trust premises or attached to school/Trust property, students or colleagues. These devices pose a safeguarding and privacy risk and are strictly prohibited.

## **16 Curriculum**

- 16.1 Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with students to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g., Health and Social Care, PSHE, Drama. Training will be provided to staff by the Trust to support them with this.
- 16.2 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and employees should take guidance in these circumstances from a senior leader.

## **17 Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters**

- 17.1 If employees are involved in recruitment and selection, they are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the Trust's recruitment and selection process. Employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with them. Further information can be found in the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 17.2 Any reference provided by a Line Manager in relation to another employee on behalf of the Trust, whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee. Employees must refer to the Trust's employment reference policy when providing references for other employees.
- 17.3 Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience, nor should they falsify a reference.

## **18 Tackling Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment**

- 18.1 Employees are required to understand the types of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying that students and colleagues may be subject to. Employees are required to have read and understood our Dignity at Work policy. Employees must not ignore any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment. Employees must positively promote equality and diversity and inclusion at all times and not display any behaviour that constitutes any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

- 18.2 The law protects employees, workers, contractors, self-employed staff, apprentices, those undertaking vocational training, volunteers, former workers and job applicants from sexual harassment and the Trust has a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of its staff at work. For further information staff should refer to the Trust's Dignity at Work Policy.
- 18.3 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined and threatened.
- 18.4 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of their protected characteristics. Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.
- 18.5 Harassment is any unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- 18.6 Any member of Staff who genuinely believes that they are being subjected to discrimination, harassment or that they are being bullied should not hesitate to use the procedures set out in the Dignity at Work Policy.

## **19 Workplace Relationships**

- 19.1 The Trust recognises that consensual personal relationships may develop between colleagues. While these are not prohibited, employees must ensure that such relationships do not compromise professional standards, safeguarding responsibilities, or the Trust's duty to prevent harassment. Any relationship that could give rise to a conflict of interest, perceived favouritism, or misuse of power (e.g. between a manager and a direct report) must be disclosed confidentially to the Head Teacher or Executive Leader.

## **20 Outside Commitments and Private Work**

- 20.1 Employees should notify their Line Manager before taking up any outside employment and must complete a declaration of secondary employment form and return this to their line manager and the HR department. The Line Manager should assess if the nature of the work might be seen to conflict with the interests of the Trust and advise accordingly.
- 20.2 Any secondary employment cannot be carried out by employees during the time the Trust employs them (i.e. when they should be in attendance at the School/Trust undertaking work for the School/Trust under their contract of employment for those specific hours), which includes periods of sickness absence.

## **21 Confidentiality**

- 21.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or

carers or other staff, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student/staff.

- 21.2 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school / Trust.
- 21.3 However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the DSL any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

## **22 Agency workers**

- 22.1 We will investigate allegations made against agency workers with the cooperation of the agency. Whilst we may decide to cease using the services of an agency worker, this will not prevent us from investigating allegations and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. We expect agency workers and agencies to cooperate with our investigations and with external agencies where applicable.
- 22.2 We will discuss with the agency whether it may be appropriate for them to consider suspending an agency worker, or whether we are prepared to redeploy an agency worker during an investigation.

## **23 Disciplinary action**

- 23.1 All staff need to understand that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The following is a list of behaviours which would be considered misconduct (taken from the Trust's Disciplinary Policy)
- 23.1.1 Breaches of the Trust's policies;
  - 23.1.2 Breaches of an employee's contract of employment;
  - 23.1.3 Damage to, or unauthorised use of, the Trust's property;
  - 23.1.4 Poor timekeeping or poor use of time;
  - 23.1.5 Unauthorised absence from work;
  - 23.1.6 Refusal to follow reasonable instructions;
  - 23.1.7 Excessive use of the Trust's telephones, email or internet usage for personal reasons;
  - 23.1.8 Inappropriate or other offensive behaviour, including using obscene language, victimisation or harassment of other members of staff or pupils;

23.1.9 Negligence in the performance of duties;

23.1.10 Smoking in no-smoking areas, which applies to anything that can be smoked and includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, pipes (including water pipes such as shisha and hookah pipes), cigars and herbal cigarettes; or

23.1.11 Poor attendance.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

23.2 The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- i. Theft, or unauthorised removal of property or the property of a colleague, contractor, pupil or member of the public;
- ii. Fraud, forgery or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets, pupil's work, examinations or assessments;
- iii. Actual or threatened violence, or behaviour which provokes violence;
- iv. Deliberate damage to the buildings, fittings, property or equipment of the Trust, or the property of a colleague, contractor, pupil or member of the public;
- v. Inappropriate conduct with children or young people, including failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- vi. Serious failure to follow the Trust's child protection and safeguarding policies;
- vii. Behaving in a way, either inside or outside of work, which could cause harm to a child, or could indicate that you pose a risk of harm to children/may not be suitable to work with children;
- viii. Making a false declaration or failing to disclose information in relation to the disqualification from childcare requirements, or becoming disqualified from providing childcare;
- ix. Serious misuse of the Trust's property or name;
- x. Deliberately accessing internet sites at work or at home, using Trust equipment, which contain pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- xi. Repeated or serious failure to obey instructions, or any other serious act of insubordination;
- xii. Bringing the Trust into serious disrepute;
- xiii. Being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, legal highs (also known as novel psychoactive substances), or other intoxicating substances during working hours, or not being capable of fulfilling your duties because of the effects of alcohol, illegal

drugs, legal highs, or other substances. This does not include the side effects of medication taken in accordance with medical advice and prescription;

- xiv. Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- xv. Serious or repeated breach of health and safety rules or serious misuse of safety equipment;
- xvi. Unauthorised access, use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in your possession is kept secure;
- xvii. Acceptance of bribes or other secret payments;
- xviii. Conviction or caution for a criminal offence that in the opinion of the Trust may affect our reputation or our relationships with our staff, pupils, parents or the public, or otherwise affects your suitability to continue to work for us;
- xix. Possession, use, supply or attempted supply of illegal drugs;
- xx. Serious neglect of duties, or a serious or deliberate breach of your contract or operating policies;
- xxi. Unauthorised use, processing or disclosure of personal data contrary to our Data Protection Policy;
- xxii. Bullying, or Harassment of, or discrimination against, employees, pupils, parents or members of the public, related to any of the protected characteristics contrary to our Equal Opportunities Policy or our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy;
- xxiii. Acts of sexual harassment;
- xxiv. Refusal to disclose any of the information required by your employment or any other information that may have a bearing on the performance of your duties;
- xxv. Giving false information as to qualifications or entitlement to work (including immigration status);
- xxvi. Making a disclosure of false or misleading information under our Whistleblowing Policy maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith;
- xxvii. Making untrue allegations in bad faith;
- xxviii. Victimising a colleague who has raised concerns, made a complaint or given evidence information under the Whistleblowing policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy or otherwise;
- xxix. Serious misuse of our information technology systems (including misuse of developed or licensed software, use of unauthorised software and misuse of email and the internet) contrary to our Acceptable use of ICT Policy

- xxx. Undertaking unauthorised paid or unpaid employment during your working hours;
- xxxi. Unauthorised entry into an area of the premises to which access is prohibited;
- xxxii. Making covert recordings of colleagues or managers.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive. Please see the Disciplinary policy for more information.

## **24 Monitoring and Review of Policy**

- 24.1 This policy is reviewed every 2 years in consultation with the joint negotiation and consultation committee (JNCC).
- 24.2 The Trust will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives

## Appendix 1 – Managing Low Level Concerns Policy

### 1 Managing low level concerns

- 1.1 This part of the policy will be followed when dealing with low level concerns raised in relation to members of staff, including supply staff, contractors or volunteers and may be adapted to each case as required. It will be used alongside the Trust complaints procedure, child protection and safeguarding policy, code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.
- 1.2 The Trust promotes a culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the Trust (including supply teachers, contractors and volunteers) are addressed appropriately.
- 1.3 This policy is designed to:
  - 1.3.1 promote and support a culture of openness and trust where staff are clear about the behaviours expected of themselves and their colleagues
  - 1.3.2 ensure staff are comfortable to raise low-level concerns; and
  - 1.3.3 provide for efficient and proportionate handling of those concerns

### 2 Recognising low level concerns

- 2.1 This policy will be used to manage 'low-level' concerns, defined in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 as any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:
  - 2.1.1 is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
  - 2.1.2 does not meet the harm threshold or is not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
  - 2.1.3 Clear guidelines are provided on the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities that are used in the setting. No personal devices are to be used in the learning environment or on external visits/learning opportunities. No images should be shared unless in line with the Inspire Education Trust Acceptable Use Policy and GDPR Policy.
- 2.2 Examples of such behaviour could include, but is not limited to:
  - 2.2.1 being over friendly with children;
  - 2.2.2 having favourites;
  - 2.2.3 taking photographs of children on their mobile phone; contrary to school/trust policy
  - 2.2.4 engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
  - 2.2.5 humiliating children.
- 2.3 While low-level concerns are safeguarding-related as outlined in paragraph 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Trust recognises that the low-level concerns process can also be used for other purposes. Staff may raise low-level concerns about matters relating to professional conduct that are not safeguarding-related, or to report a wellbeing concern about a colleague.

### **3 Sharing low level concerns**

- 3.1 For our culture of openness and trust to prevail, all staff should share any low level concerns they have.
- 3.2 To minimise and hopefully eradicate the risk of those opportunities being missed, it is critical that staff understand their role in identifying and reporting low level concerns.
- 3.3 All staff are encouraged to immediately report low level safeguarding concerns as defined in this policy so that the identified behaviours can be investigated and managed appropriately.
- 3.4 All low level concerns in relation to staff, supply staff, contractors or volunteers should be reported immediately to:
  - a) The Headteacher (for concerns about school-based staff).
  - b) The Deputy CEO or CEO (for concerns about central team staff including Executive Heads).
  - c) The Executive Headteacher or Chair of Governors (for concerns about Headteachers).
  - d) The CEO (for concerns about the Deputy CEO).
  - e) The Chair of the Trust Board (for concerns about the CEO).
- 3.5 Where there is a conflict of interest, staff must report the concern immediately to an appropriate Senior / Executive Leader, Chair of the Local Governing Body or Chair of the Trust Board.
- 3.6 The procedure for reporting low level concerns is consistent with that for reporting allegations of abuse as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff do not need to determine whether their concern meets the threshold set out in part one of this policy or is a low level concern. The appropriate senior leader will make this determination once the staff member has reported the issue.

### **4 Responding to low-level concerns**

- 4.1 The appropriate senior leader will review the concern to confirm that it is not a more serious issue that should be dealt with under the allegations against staff procedure (as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). An issue reported as a low level concern would be dealt under the allegations against staff procedure where it meets the harm threshold or there is a pattern of low level concerns expressed about the individual or wider staff practices generally. If necessary, the appropriate senior leader will discuss the concern with the LADO to determine whether it should be dealt with under the allegations against staff procedure.
- 4.2 The appropriate senior leader will discuss the concern with the individual who raised it and will seek to establish the facts as appropriate.
- 4.3 Most low-level concerns are likely to be minor and can be dealt with by means of management support or additional training. Where necessary, action may be taken in accordance with the Trust's code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.

4.4 If the concern has been raised via a third party, the appropriate senior leader will collect evidence by speaking directly to the person who raised the concern (unless it has been raised anonymously), the individual involved and any witnesses.

4.5 Where a low level concern is raised about a member of supply staff or a contractor, the concern will be shared with the supply agency or contractors' employer so they can take appropriate steps in accordance with their own policies and statutory guidance.

#### **Recording low-level concerns**

4.6 All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and will include details of the concern, the context and action taken. The records will be kept confidential and held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

4.7 Records of low-level concerns will be reviewed so potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. If patterns are identified, the Trust will decide on an appropriate course of action and will refer the matter to the LADO where the behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harm threshold set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

4.8 Low level concerns are regularly collated across the Trust for reporting and analysis. A summative overview (anonymous) is provided to the Safeguarding Committee on a half-terminly basis for scrutiny and monitoring.

The record of the low-level concern, if safeguarding-related, will be kept at least until the person leaves our Trust in accordance with the data retention policy.

## Appendix 2 – Work Mobile Phone Policy

### Introduction

- 1.1 Work mobile telephones are provided at the discretion of the trust on the basis of business need which is usually dependent on the role that you perform.

### Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees at the trust who are provided with a work mobile phone. It should be read in conjunction with our ICT user policy which sets out obligations on the employee in terms of use of equipment as well as how systems are monitored in accordance with relevant legislation.

### Personal Use

- 3.1 If you are issued with a work mobile telephone, these are for use connected to the business of the trust.
- 3.2 However, we recognise that there may be occasions when you may need to use the handset for personal matters. Usage is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure levels of use (text, data and phone charges) are appropriate and you may be sent an itemised bill for your personal usage. You will be required to pay this direct to the organisation or the organisation may deduct the sum owed from your salary/wages.

### Responsibility

- 4.1 The mobile phone must be returned to the organisation on the last day of your employment.
- 4.2 The security of your work mobile telephone is your responsibility, including all communications made from it.
- 4.3 Do not leave it in a visible place such as in an unattended car. You must ensure the use of a personal identification number (PIN) or a password for security.
- 4.4 Theft of a work mobile telephone must be notified to the police in the first instance.
- 4.5 Loss or theft of a work mobile phone must be reported to the network provider immediately to prevent or minimise the unauthorised use of the device.

### Driving

- 5.1 Drivers must comply with current legislation and so you must not use your device whilst driving.
- 5.2 You should not endanger yourself or others when on business for the trust and should concentrate on driving and avoid distractions. This includes answering and making telephone calls, sending text messages or faxes, and accessing the internet, etc.
- 5.3 Even if the telephone or equipment is hands free, it's use can be dangerous. Wherever possible you should wait until the vehicle is stationary and in a safe place before using a hands-free telephone.

5.4 You should familiarise yourself and comply with the following relevant policies: ICT user policy

5.5 You are not permitted to use the mobile phone for any of the following:

- Any communication that could constitute bullying and harassment (see our anti-bullying and harassment policy)
- Inappropriate or excessive personal use
- Streaming data whilst not connected to WiFi incurring unacceptable data charges
- Gambling
- Accessing pornography
- Taking photos of, downloading or storing offensive images
- Illegally downloading or distributing copyright information
- Using the device in breach of this policy

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

5.6 Any unauthorised use or breach of this policy may be managed through the disciplinary procedure. A serious breach of this policy may be considered as gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal. Whether it is minor or gross misconduct will depend on the circumstances, but you should expect any breach of the driving provisions to be considered as gross misconduct

5.7 If you reasonably believe that a colleague has breached this policy you should report it without delay to your line manager or a senior member of staff.

## Appendix 3 – Email Etiquette

The Trust encourages all employees to observe the rules of the email etiquette. It is important to emphasise that this is an etiquette and as such, would not constitute a breach of policy if these rules were not adhered to. The etiquette is in place to encourage polite behaviour and respect the work-life balance and wellbeing of colleagues.



**Inspire Education Trust**  
Together we achieve, individually we grow

## EMAIL ETIQUETTE



Please check and read your emails to suit your **preferred working pattern**. Staff are not expected to reply to emails outside of their working pattern.



Staff should use the **'delay deliver'** function on outlook if sending emails before **7am**, after **7pm** on **weekdays** or anytime **during weekends**.



Only send an email to the **relevant people** – **'CC'** is used to keep other people **'looped in'** with no expectation of a reply from them.



Use **'Forwarding'** appropriately - have you got permission to forward someone else's email onto another colleague?



When inviting a person to a meeting, please be clear on the **purpose** to avoid any confusion or **concern** and allow time for the recipient to **prepare**.



Some things are better said **face-to-face** and not via email as the tone and intonation is lost via email and the original intention can be lost.



Remember that **CAPITALS** are interpreted as **'shouting'** and are not appropriate in an email.



If you are using outlook on your personal devices consider using the **'Do Not Disturb'** feature so you're not interrupted out of hours.

Reviewed by: Josh Smith October 2025  
Next Review Date: October 2027  
Approved by Directors: 29 January 2026

Signed:



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Lois Whitehouse  
CEO



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Jane Durkin  
Chair of Trust People