

Code of Conduct (Staff)

This policy applies to:	All staff
Author/Department:	Head of Human Resources
Area/Person responsible:	Chief Operating Officer
Date approved:	March 2023
Related Documents/ Policies:	Staff Handbook
Date of Next Review:	March 2025

Date of most recent review:	March 2023
Changes made:	Return to work procedures, additional Appendix items

The Equality Act 2010: The Equality Duty

The Trust has a duty to consider the needs of all individuals in our day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to our employees. The Equality Duty has three aims, which require the Trust to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff who are directly employed by Stamford Park Trust, agency workers and contractors. This Code of Conduct Policy is intended to communicate a shared expectation of each employee's duty to the rest of the Trust community in the execution of their duties. Staff should carry out their responsibilities honestly, effectively and efficiently and in accordance with the law.

2. Other Policies and Procedures

This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross references with all relevant Trust employment policies.

3. Professional Conduct

Staff are expected to treat each other fairly and with dignity and personal accountability, ensuring in their own interests and the interests of the Trust, that they conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner.

4. Conflicts of Interest

All decisions, activities and affiliations are to be undertaken in the best interest of the Trust and the public. Staff may work for themselves or others whilst in our employment but this is subject to a number of safeguards, the major provisions being:

- Outside employment must not be in connection to the Trust, be fully disclosed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team
- The outside work may not distract from the employee's primary responsibilities to the Trust
- Staff must not act in a way that would be compromising or embarrassing to the Trust and its reputation
- Staff must not use premises or Trust information or resources without the permission of a senior leader. These private arrangements must not imply approval, by the Trust, or an associate with the Trust
- Staff must make satisfactory arrangements for the deduction of their national insurance, tax and any insurance implications
- A teacher should not accept remuneration for providing tuition within their discipline to students of the Trust

5. Health, Safety and Security

The Trust is committed to promoting and implementing all relevant health and safety legislation and recognises that the highest priority must be given to safe methods of work at all times. Colleagues must familiarise themselves with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and must ensure that all health and safety standards are met in accordance with that Policy. Colleagues must not, under any circumstances, behave in a way that could endanger their own health and safety or the health and safety of others.

Colleagues are required to support measures to improve security in the Trust, in particular, they should wear their identification badges at all times and respect guidelines for the use of the premises outside normal term-times.

Any breach of the Trust's health and safety rules or regulations or Health and Safety Policy will be viewed seriously by the Trust and may constitute gross misconduct in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

6. Equality

The Trust serves the whole community and staff must abide by the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy. All staff are required to subscribe to and act in accordance with the Trust's Purpose, Vision and Values. Any form of discrimination, abuse or harassment will be treated as disciplinary offences in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

7. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

The Trust recognises that all members of its working community and its students have the right to be treated with consideration, respect and dignity and it is committed to creating and maintaining a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation. Instances of bullying and / or harassment at work, or outside work if it has a bearing on the working relationship, are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All instances of bullying and / or harassment will be managed through the Trust's Disciplinary Policy as appropriate.

8. Punctuality and Hours

Colleagues are expected to be punctual and arrive in good time for work, lessons and meetings etc. Instances of lateness should be explained by the employee concerned to his/her line manager, who will monitor the situation and take action as appropriate, which may include action in accordance with the College's Disciplinary policy. Individuals should not vary their normal hours of work without prior approval from their line manager.

9. Sickness Absence

The Trust's Staff Attendance Policy should be referred to which outlines the standards that are expected of all Colleagues and the procedures that should be followed during any period of absence. It also provides details of how the Trust will address and manage issues related to employee absence.

10. Holiday Arrangements

Teachers and term time only staff will have their periods of non-working defined in accordance with the calendar for each individual site. Support staff are required to seek agreement with their line manager before fixing any period of leave and to book it on Access. Other than in exceptional and agreed circumstances, staff working at Ashton Sixth Form are not permitted to take annual leave during the period specified each year for enrolment and other days as specified by the Centre Principal. Enrolment is normally late August / early September and is defined each year.

11. Dress and Appearance

The Trust wishes to project a highly professional image at all times to students, prospective students, their families and other stakeholders. Staff can contribute to this purpose through adopting dress appropriate to their duties and responsibilities. For the school sites they should follow the dress code policy that is in place.

The College expectations are:

- All staff are expected to dress appropriately for work and staff should wear smart professional business clothing
- All staff must ensure their dress conforms with health and safety requirements associated with the task being carried out
- For staff within a workshop environment or those in technician roles it is acceptable to wear a college polo shirt and cargo style trousers with personal protective equipment (ppe) as appropriate
- No item of clothing should contain wording which others may find offensive
- Jeans, denim, shorts, trainers, combat style trousers, football/rugby tops or slogan t-shirts should not be worn
- Some departments, such as Reception or Performing Arts, may adopt a College uniform or style
- Staff may be asked to cover up visible body art where it is felt necessary
- Cultural dress and appearance is supported by the College but should not have a detrimental impact on the staff – student relationship
- A clean, tidy appearance must be maintained by all

12. Hospitality and Gifts

Care must always be taken by staff to ensure that whenever hospitality / gifts are accepted, no obligation to the person or organisation in question is accepted. Hospitality / gifts to individual staff in excess of £20 in value should not be accepted and any such offer should be reported to the Head of Human Resources.

13. Smoking / Vaping

The Trust operates a non-smoking / vaping policy in all of its buildings and grounds

14. Alcohol and Substance Misuse

Staff should not attend work or represent the Trust under the influence of drugs (including legal highs) and / or alcohol. If staff attend a social event / trip organised by, or as a representative of, the Trust, where alcohol is available, they are reminded that they should act responsibly and appropriately.

15. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All staff must be actively involved in the CPD process and have a responsibility to keep themselves up to date in their field through CPD and other development methods.

16. External Communication including Press statements

Colleagues should not make unauthorised statements to the press regarding the business of the Trust. All press enquiries should be directed to the Marketing Manager. This does not apply to the Trade Union Representatives acting in a Trade Union capacity. The Trust and Trade Unions will inform each other on press statements affecting each other's business.

17. Trust Property and Personal Use

In order to preserve the quality of the Trust's environment and physical resources, staff must ensure that they, and the students for whom they are responsible, look after the Trust premises and property which they use in the course of the Trust's business. They must ensure that procedures for borrowing Trust equipment are observed and that the security of the Trust is maintained as well as possible and not put at risk. Staff must not make personal use of Trust property or facilities unless properly authorised to do so by their line manager.

All equipment made available to staff remains the property of the Trust and should be returned in full working order, when no longer required, or on leaving employment with the Trust.

18. Information Technology

The Trust understands how technology can provide opportunities to support the learning experience and the wider work of the Trust. At the same time there is a commitment to protecting the Trust from illegal or damaging actions by individuals or damaging actions by individuals knowingly or unknowingly and there is an aim to provide guidance to Colleagues on the safe and appropriate use of technology. The Trust may make occasional checks on workplace computers in order to ensure the activities being carried out are within permitted guidelines. All Colleagues have an individual responsibility to uphold and apply in practice the Trust's IT Acceptable Use Policy. Breaches of this policy may be addressed in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

19. Confidentiality

All members of the Trust's working community have a personal responsibility to protect and maintain the confidentiality of both the Trust and its stakeholders. The disclosure of confidential information and/or personal data stored by the Trust is prohibited, except as authorised or required by the law or in accordance with a member of staff's duties under his/her contract of employment (including statements made between or to Trade Union Representatives) or when making a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Colleagues should understand their responsibilities outlined in the Trust's Data Protection Policy. A breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee's responsible in accordance with the Trust Disciplinary policy.

For posts with access to particularly sensitive information e.g. financial and/or business information, the employee concerned can be asked to give an undertaking not to break confidentiality in respect of the Trust's affairs either during the course of employment or subsequently, nor to act to the Trust's detriment in any way within twelve months of leaving his/her employment. Staff must not disclose without authorisation information on Colleagues, students, financial information, marketing

strategies or business plans. Such confidentiality should continue to be honoured for 12 months after cessation of employment.

20. Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

Course materials and resources written or developed for the purposes of carrying out a member of staff's role in the Trust remain the property of the Trust. Copyright for Trust resources remain the property of the Trust and any decision to apply for patents or registration of designs can only be made by the Trust.

A member of staff should notify the Trust in writing as soon as the employee believes that she/he has or may be developing a copyright registerable design or patentable invention. The Trust is the owner of all intellectual property rights arising from any copyright registerable design or patentable invention produced by a member of staff in the course of her/his employment duties at the Trust, or produced to satisfy any requirements arising in the course of her/his Trust work, or commissioned by the Trust from the employee for Trust purposes.

21. Personal Relationships (Colleagues)

The Trust recognises that Colleagues who work together may form personal relationships and, in some cases, close personal relationships. The Trust does not, as a general rule, wish to interfere with such personal friendships and relationships. However, it must also ensure that colleagues conduct such relationships in a professional and responsible manner at work and they continue to fulfil their duties both diligently and effectively. Therefore, where relationships exist or develop these should be drawn to the attention of the Colleagues' line manager and the Head of HR.

22. Staff Social Media Guidelines for Personal Use Outside of Work

Social networking sites or blogs may be categorised as either public or private. It is not unusual for content on private sites to be made public and Colleagues should be aware that content which may be considered as offensive, bullying or bringing the Trust into disrepute might lead to disciplinary action. Staff should ensure that privacy settings are set to high to ensure learners cannot view personal information such as posts and photos.

Social networking sites can service as a learning tool where training videos and other materials are made easily accessible to students in a user-friendly and engaging way. However, the open nature of the internet means that social networking sites can leave Colleagues vulnerable, therefore it is advisable to have separate professional and private social network accounts and do not have current students as 'friends or connections' on private accounts.

Any communications that members of staff make in a professional or personal capacity through social media must not:

A - breach confidentiality as set out below:

- Revealing confidential intellectual property or information owned by the Trust

- Giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague, learner or partner contact) or organisation
- Defaming the Trust and its practices
- Discussing the Trust's internal workings (such as agreements that it is reaching with partner institutions / customers or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public)

B – do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including nationality) religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Using social media to bully another individual
- “Liking” or posting images that are discriminatory or offensive, or links to such contents

C – bring the Trust into disrepute for example

- Criticising or arguing with students, colleagues, partners or competitors
- Making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups
- Posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content

D – breach copyright for example

- Using someone else's images or written content without permissions
- Failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something

23. Safeguarding

- Colleagues should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Colleagues are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Colleagues should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Colleagues should acknowledge that deliberately invented / malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Colleagues should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Colleagues should be aware that breachers of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching
- Colleagues and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- Colleagues should be aware of and understand the Trust's Safeguarding and Whistle Blowing Policies

24. Relationships with Students

Staff members are expected to maintain relations of the highest professional standard with students and colleagues at all times. Professional conduct in relation to students is primarily to protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of students, particularly young people under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults, whether socially, economically, physically or emotionally and to protect them from sexual activity, for example grooming, or neglect.

Staff are not permitted to encourage or start any personal relationship of a sexual / romantic nature or other potentially inappropriate relationships with students. This includes during the working day, outside of work or through social networking sites.

Furthermore, under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, if a professional in a 'position of trust' has sexual relations with any of their charges under 18 they could face a prison sentence and risk being on the sex offenders' register. Any allegations involving sexual offences are reported through a Safeguarding Officer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations. This can include suspension of the employee with a strategy meeting arranged with representatives from the Trust, the police and the Safeguarding Children Unit of the local authority to determine and assess all known information and agree next steps.

25. Infatuations

Colleagues need to recognise that students may become strongly attracted to a member of staff and / or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. Colleagues should be aware that there may be a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted and should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question and does not appear to encourage this. Where an infatuation or crush is suspected, it must be reported to the line manager.

26. Communication and Social Contact with Students

Communications with learners and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as personal mobile phones, text, e-mails, blogs, social media etc. All communications are required to be transparent and may be open to scrutiny.

We discourage Colleagues from socialising outside of work with students and under no circumstances should Colleagues invite students to their home or any private setting, nor should they arrange to meet socially, either individually or in small groups other than in a work related context. Colleagues must always consider the external interpretation of their actions: for example, inviting one or two students from a larger group to a restaurant could be perceived as favouritism when the whole group was not invited.

Typical situations which should be avoided include:

- Any physical contact
- One to one meetings held in private
- Offering a lift to a lone student
- Socialising outside of Trust functions

- Offering the student any paid work

Colleagues must not provide students with their personal details which include home phone numbers, home addresses or private networking sites. It is sometimes necessary for teachers to give students their mobile numbers but this should be for legitimate reasons only and not be used for social contact with students.

27. Allegations against Staff

Any allegations of abuse or improper behaviour towards students will be dealt with following the Trust Disciplinary and Safeguarding Policies. As part of the investigation, the matter may be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Where staff have any safeguarding concerns about another member of staff, these concerns must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. If the accused person resigns or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with the policy.

All Colleagues must attend Safeguarding and Prevent duty training provided by the Trust.

28. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check

The Trust is committed to adhering to the DBS's Code of Practice. There will be instances when existing members of staff will also require a new DBS check. DBS checks are undertaken to ensure that the Trust upholds its duty of care to protect vulnerable groups who access the Trust. Failure to co-operate with a reasonable request on the part of the Trust to obtain a DBS check may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

29. Criminal Offences

All Colleagues have an obligation to inform the Head of HR at the earliest opportunity if they are the subject of criminal investigations, charge, caution, warning or conviction to allow an appropriate assessment to be taken. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. However, being the subject of criminal investigations, charge, caution, warning or conviction will not necessarily result in disciplinary action. This will depend on the effect on the employee's ability or suitability to undertake their job role and / or on the reputation of the Trust. In such circumstances, the Disciplinary Policy will be followed and the Trust may not wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take.

Staff should be aware that certain criminal offences, whether committed inside or outside working hours, could constitute gross misconduct. Although there is no legal definition of the term, gross misconduct is misconduct so serious that it may destroy the employment contract and make any further working relationship and trust impossible. Allegations of gross misconduct may result in immediate suspension, which may be followed by dismissal in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

30. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of HR on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and in order to adhere to good practice.

