STOUR VALE ACADEMY TRUST

CODE OF CONDUCT

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STAFFING POLICY STATEMENT

VERSION / DATE	SEPTEMBER 2025
NEXT VERSION DUE BY	SEPTEMBER 2028

Contents

Contents 2
1. Purpose of the Code of Conduct 3
2. Scope 3
3. Responsibilities 4
4. The Seven Principles of Public Life 4
5. The Code of Conduct. 6
5.1. General. 6
5.2. Treating other people with dignity and respect 7
5.3. … the community and service users 7
5.4. … pupils 7
5.5. …colleagues 10
5.6. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest 11
5.7. …in dealing with contracts and services 11
5.8. …in dealing with other parts of the Trust 12
5.9. …in other employment. 13
5.10. …dealing with the media 13
6. Use of Trust, school and setting premises, equipment & systems 14
7. Confidentiality 15
8. Propriety, Behaviour and appearance 16
9. Social Contact and Social Networking 18
9.1. Criminal actions 19
10. Links to other documents 20
10.1. Stour Vale Policies 20
10.2. Other documents 20

1. Purpose of the Code of Conduct

Stour Vale Academy Trust has an ethos that is based on respect, integrity, excellence and collaboration. In this Code of Conduct we aim to be transparent about the behaviours we expect from the people involved in our organisation. In this way we hope not only to communicate our expectations, but also make real our values.

The Code of Conduct sets down expectations in terms of behaviours, and some examples of conduct that the Trust considers unacceptable but cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour. In areas where no specific guidance is given, those under the scope of the Code are expected to consider their decisions and actions and measure them against the values of the Trust before they act.

The Trust believes that the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, form a sound guide to the way in which those employed by, or otherwise involved with the Trust should conduct themselves

2. Scope

All adults have a duty to keep pupils safe, promote their welfare and to protect them from radicalisation (the Prevent Duty), abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and safeguarding concerns. This duty is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and pupils and behaviour by adults that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Following this Code will help to safeguard adults from being maliciously, falsely or mistakenly suspected or accused of misconduct in relation to pupils.

For the purposes of this Code, the term and references to 'adult' means the following: all employees, Trustees, local governing body members, external contractors and suppliers, volunteers and any other individual who works for, or provides services to, Stour Vale Academy Trust.

For the purposes of this Code 'young person/people', 'pupils' and 'child/ren' includes all those for whom Stour Vale Academy Trust provides education or other services.

Schools, settings and the Central Team may agree further local expectations, which should be appended to this document. Schools and settings are encouraged to agree these appendices with staff and governors locally. Similarly, schools and settings may also develop local codes of practice relating to areas of this Code, but these should provide local interpretation of the Code, and should not in any way weaken the standards set here.

This Code takes account of the most recent versions of the following guidance (statutory and non-statutory):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings

3. Responsibilities

Leaders in schools and settings and the Trust are expected to make the Code of Conduct available, ensuring that all adults in their establishment are aware of the Code and feel able to ask any questions about it to ensure that they can meet the expectations. Leaders should also ensure that volunteers and others working in their establishment understand the expectations placed on them by this Code.

All adults in member schools and settings and the Central Team are expected to read the Code and ensure that their actions and decisions are consistent with the spirit of the Code of Conduct. This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal responsibilities of employees and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours and seek advice where necessary.

Our communities have a right to expect the highest standards from those involved in the education and care of children and young people within Stour Vale Academy Trust, who must act in ways that do not cause their honesty or integrity to be questioned. The Trust reserves the right to monitor the behaviour of adults in accordance with relevant legislation in order to ensure that these expectations are met.

4. The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Trust believes that the Seven Principles of Public Life are fundamental to the confidence that stakeholders should have in all those involved with the Trust. These principles are in accord with the values of the Trust and should guide the ways in which decisions are made and actions are taken.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

General.
Those involved in the Trust, at whatever level, will be accountable for the way in which their conduct and decisions reflect these principles.

5. The Code of Conduct

5.1. General.

Adults involved in Stour Vale should comply with the terms of their engagement, whether this is through an employment contract or not. This includes expectations of regular and punctual attendance.

This Code of Conduct forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for staff of Stour Vale Academy Trust, whether in member schools and settings or part of the Central Team, and all those involved in the business of the Trust are expected to comply with the Code. Any locally agreed additions must also be respected by those employed to work in that establishment.

Stour Vale Academy Trust will take a strict approach to breaches of this Code, and these will be addressed in accordance with Stour Vale's Disciplinary Policy. Where such behaviour constitutes gross misconduct, an employee may be summarily dismissed.

Good attendance, including timekeeping and compliance with any local requirements for signing in / out or notification of lateness is a fundamental expectation of all employees, as failure to attend as expected creates additional pressures for colleagues and adversely affects pupils.

All absence, whether from paid or voluntary work should be notified in advance, and in the case of employees, authorised. The exception is unplanned absence, such as sickness, which should be reported in the manner required in the workplace and covered after the event by appropriate notification or medical certification where necessary (e.g. in employment).

Adults must adhere to the school or setting's Health and Safety policy, procedure and guidance and must ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the workplace safe and well. This includes taking immediate safety action in a potentially harmful situation (either on or off-site) by complying with statutory and school or setting guidelines and collaborating with colleagues and other appropriate agencies.

Employees should comply with any relevant professional standards in all their work and must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the school, setting or Trust into disrepute.

Headteachers are required to comply with the Headteachers' standards

All teaching staff (including leadership posts on teaching terms and conditions of employment) are required to comply with the Teachers' Standards and Part 2 of these Standards sets out requirements for personal and professional conduct.

Adults must not allow their personal or political beliefs to interfere with their work.
Employees should satisfactorily comply with instructions given for carrying out

the functions of their employment and any reasonable request relating to their function by an authorised manager.

5.2. Treating other people with dignity and respect

All employees of Stour Vale are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect and to comply with the Trust's equality policies.

All roles in Stour Vale and member schools and settings are "public offices" as our activities are funded by public money. As such, the Seven Principles of Public Life provides sound guidance on the standards expected when dealing with others.

Harassment or bullying, discriminatory, threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour or language are not permitted, and acts of abuse, discrimination, harassment, or bullying may result in disciplinary action.

Confidential personal or financial information of any pupil, parent, carer, colleague or other contact at work should not be disclosed to a third party except under formal arrangements for information sharing, or as required by law, and covered by the Trust's privacy notices.

5.3. ... the community and service users

Employees should provide efficient, impartial and courteous service to individuals and groups within the community and should respond positively and openly to any questions about the activities of the Trust or member schools and settings. Due regard should be given to confidentiality.
Actions, decisions and communication with others should reinforce public confidence in Stour Vale Academy Trust and member schools and settings and should in no way weaken or erode that trust.

5.4. ... pupils

All roles in Stour Vale and member schools and settings are positions of trust, and it is important that pupils and their parents / carers can have confidence that we hold the welfare and best interests of children paramount in our decision making and actions.

All adults, as appropriate to their role and/or job description, must:

- Place the well-being and learning of pupils at the centre of their professional practice

- Have high expectations for all pupils, be committed to addressing underachievement, and work to help pupils progress regardless of their background and personal circumstances

- Treat pupils fairly and with respect, take their knowledge, views, opinions and feelings seriously, and value diversity and individuality

- Model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in pupils, including enthusiasm for learning, a spirit of enquiry, honesty, tolerance, social responsibility, patience, and a genuine concern for other people

- Respond sensitively to the differences in the home backgrounds and circumstances of pupils, recognising the key role that parents and carers play in pupils' education

- Seek to work in partnership with parents and carers, respecting their views and promoting understanding and co-operation to support the young person's learning and wellbeing in and out of school or setting

- Reflect on their own practice, develop their skills, knowledge and expertise, and adapt appropriately to learn with and from colleagues

- Ensure that the same professional standards are always applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity

Adults are expected to interact with children in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. This means that individuals must avoid any behaviour that might cause an observer to have concerns, this is particularly important in relation to staff providing personal care, or dealing with pupils on a one-to-one basis.

Adults have a duty to act in accordance with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and also in accordance with the appropriate Academy Safeguarding Policy.

Adults must report any safeguarding, child protection, welfare or radicalisation concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, following the procedure and timeline set out in the appropriate Safeguarding policy.

All adults have a responsibility to read and understand the relevant parts of the current edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the Trust / school / setting policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection. Amongst other requirements all adults should:

- Take care that their own behaviour always meets expectations in this regard;

- Report through the appropriate channel any incident or behaviour that falls short of the required standard, or in other ways causes concern for the safety and welfare of children.

All adults have a duty to report low-level concerns, in addition to concerns that meet the harm threshold, to the DSL or Headteacher to ensure that matters are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

It is vital that an immediate report is made where there is a concern that an individual 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.

In exercising these responsibilities employees at all levels should be aware that it is not just concerns that meet the harms threshold which should be reported.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold (above). Low-level concern is 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, setting or trust may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff Code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

Such behaviours are to be avoided, but might occur innocently, or thoughtlessly, or be context specific, but they may be part of a pattern of behaviour leading to abuse, and we will deal with each referral on its merits.

Personal gifts must not be given to pupils or their families/carers. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return. Any reward given to a pupil

should be consistent with the academy's behaviour or rewards policy, recorded, and not based on favouritism.

Care should be taken when selecting children for specific activities, jobs, privileges and when pupils are excluded from an activity in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Methods of selection and exclusion should be subject to clear, fair and agreed criteria.

In the event that an adult has found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards, the adult should self-refer to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. Stour Vale Academy Trust is committed to creating an environment where adults are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer.

Any action or decision that impacts adversely on the safety or welfare of children, or is contrary to relevant policies on Safeguarding, Child Protection and Health & Safety may be considered to breach that trust and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

5.5. ...colleagues

Behaviour in the workplace should embody the Stour Vale values of trust, transparency and collaboration, and all decisions and actions should be weighed against these values.

This means there is a collective and individual responsibility for maintaining the values. This should not stifle open and honest discussion, and complaints or suggestions will be welcomed when they are presented in a positive and constructive manner, in accordance with the Trust's values. Any action that is deemed to be contrary to the core values of the Trust may result in disciplinary action. There are established grievance procedures for dealing with complaints from employees about their colleagues or managers that cannot be resolved informally.

Where identity cards / badges are issued these should be always worn visibly, unless this presents a health & safety risk.

Some roles require personal protective equipment to be used to ensure the health & safety of the wearer and others, it is imperative that such PPE is used in accordance with requirements.

Certain behaviours that are acceptable in private life may cause offence to others in the workplace, or make them uncomfortable, and should be avoided.

Consequently:

- Employees should dress appropriately for their work, and should not neglect their personal hygiene to such an extent that it is offensive to their fellow employees or others with whom they come into contact;
- Smoking, including vaping, is not permitted on the any of the Trust's premises. Employees are asked to respect others wishing to enter or leave the site (eg by ensuring that entrances are not blocked). Cigarette ends, etc., are to be disposed of with proper care and without littering. Local arrangements may be made for designated smoking areas offsite;
- Gambling or the taking of illegal drugs or other non-prescribed psychoactive substances is not permitted.
- The drinking of alcohol on Trust premises is not permitted, except on agreed occasions, e.g school or setting social events. Trust funds are not to be used for the purchase of alcohol;
- All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other psychoactive substances.

5.6. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Those employed by Stour Vale Academy Trust, or otherwise involved in its business, are expected to avoid conflict of interest between their role in the Trust and any involvement in other activities.

To this end, membership or affiliation to any group or organisation that could be considered to be in conflict with their duty to the Trust and / school or setting, and where their relationship with any individual(s) might cause a conflict with such duties should be declared. Membership of a trade union or staff representative group would not need to be declared.

5.7. ...in dealing with contracts and services

All contracts and business arrangements between the Trust and other organisation or individuals must be awarded on merit. Those involved in the process should take care to ensure that they follow the Trust's Financial Procedures Manual and cannot be seen as exercising favouritism in favour of businesses owned or run by friends, family members, or business associates. Neither should any illegal discriminatory practice be exercised in the tendering process.

Any financial or other interest in, or association with an organisation or individual with which the Trust has an existing or proposed contract must be declared. This should normally result in the removal of any involvement in the procurement or management of such a contract. If the skills and knowledge of the individual means their involvement is essential, suitable supervision arrangements must be put in place to guarantee the integrity of the process.

Confidential information regarding the award of contracts, or processes intended to determine the award of contracts, should not be disclosed to any unauthorised person or organisation.

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Adults need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed by others as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when pupils or parents/carers wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults e.g. at Christmas or as a thank you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any gift received must be treated in line with the Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

For the avoidance of doubt gifts of money from any source must always be refused.

In order to ensure full openness and accountability, all other gifts and hospitality received should be declared and entered on the gifts and hospitality register maintained by each establishment.

Any fee paid for work done by an employee of the Trust in the course of their employment must be paid to the Trust.

Apart from participating in concessionary schemes arranged by the Trust / school / setting, trades unions or other such groups for their members, employees shall not use Trust, school or setting business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade / discount prices for non-school / setting activities.

Adults should ensure they are both familiar and comply with the Trust Fraud Response Plan.

5.8. ...in dealing with other parts of the Trust

Stour Vale is a locally based organisation providing universal services in education to its communities. As such it is likely that some staff of the Trust, and others involved in its activities, are also going to be users of the Trust's services. When acting as a private individual in, for instance, seeking a school or setting place for a child, or raising a complaint with a school or setting, there should not be an expectation of favourable treatment as a result of any professional connection to the Trust. All such matters must be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policies as they apply to the general public and no favour, or disadvantage, should occur because of the individual's involvement with the Trust.

Personal relationships between individuals within the Trust must not be allowed to cause the integrity of anyone involved in the Trust's activities to be questioned. Appropriate professional relationships are not called into question here, but any family relationship, or close friendship outside of the work environment should be declared if this creates a potential conflict of interests as a result of line management responsibilities, involvement in recruitment or other decisions.

5.9. ...in other employment.

The Trust understands that some additional paid employment, such as working for an examination board, can bring useful insight and experience into the Trust. Equally, consultancy and similar work can add value to the Trust's work.

Where this work takes place during normal working hours the arrangements should be made to have the fees / income paid into the Trust. Any additional expenses for which the Trust is reimbursed (e.g. travel) may be paid, but no other payment will be made to the individual.

Other employment, including voluntary work, must not conflict with the interests of the Trust / school / setting and should normally take place outside of normal working hours. Such employment must not have the effect of bringing the Trust, school or setting into disrepute, or interfering with the ability of the employee to perform their usual duties.

In order to avoid the potential for a conflict of interest, or misunderstanding, employees in schools and settings are expected to discuss such employment with their Headteacher, (CEO for Headteachers and the Central Team and manager for settings) before taking it up.

If using materials developed in Stour Vale Academy Trust and member schools and settings it should be understood that the Trust retains the intellectual property rights / copyright and appropriate authority for its use outside the Trust should be secured in advance. No confidential information, or information related to an individual case of child protection should be disclosed.

Employees should ensure that such activities do not constitute a conflict of interest; adversely affect their primary employment by the Trust, or exceed the legal maximum working week of 48 hours as defined by the Working Time Regulations. Permission will not be unreasonably refused, particularly where there may be an identifiable benefit to the school, setting or Trust (e.g. exam marking).

5.10. ...dealing with the media

All communications with the media regarding the activities of the Trust or member schools and settings, including social media content on the school, setting or Trust's own sites, should be checked and authorised through the appropriate channels, and in contentious issues by the CEO, Headteacher or setting manager, in liaison with the Directors, Headteacher(s) and Chairs of Local Governing Bodies. This applies whether the stories are positive or negative and whether they are generated within the Trust, school or setting or are the result of media enquiries. Employees should not provide information or responses to the press, but instead refer the matter to the CEO or

Headteacher, as appropriate.

Adults should not disclose sensitive information about the Trust, school or setting, its employees, pupils, partners or governors to other parties without appropriate permission.

Where an individual member of staff may wish to contribute to a professional, academic or other publication on an issue that relates to their role they should consult the CEO or Headteacher, as appropriate, before publication.

The expression of views or giving accounts on social media is likely to be viewed in the same way as communicating with the media where the topic is related to the employee's professional role or workplace.

6. Use of Trust, school and setting premises, equipment & systems

Adults should comply with any local arrangements for school / setting / office opening hours and avoid creating additional costs and / or pressure on facilities management staff by requiring the premises to be open unnecessarily.

Trust, school and setting equipment and systems are available for school / setting-related activities and should not be used for the fulfilment of another job.

Any personal use of ICT equipment or systems must be in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy. Making of long or numerous private telephone calls (and emails) is not permitted. Trust employees must not access social networking websites for personal use (i.e. non- job related use) during work time. Access to some journals, blogs and social networking sites is permitted using Trust / school / setting equipment during work time for the purposes of undertaking job related duties only.

All users of the Trust's equipment (including laptops, mobile phones or linked devices) must ensure that they comply with security procedures relating to IT use. This includes the use of secure passwords when logging in to Trust / school / setting systems, logging off at the end of use to avoid unauthorised access, and ensuring the passwords are not shared or made available to unauthorised persons.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of Trust, school and setting equipment or communication systems is not permitted. The following list of inappropriate activities is not exhaustive:

- creating, sending or forwarding any message that would reasonably be considered inappropriate or unacceptable;
- committing or implying commitment to any contractual arrangements;

- accessing, publication or circulation of illegal, offensive, unacceptable, inappropriate or non-work related material;
- any illegal activities;
- posting confidential information about the Trust, school or setting and/or other employees, children or parents;
- gambling or gaming;
- unauthorised use of Trust, school or setting facilities (or employee's personal IT equipment), for personal use during employee's working time.

Monitoring software will be in use on IT equipment belonging to the Trust, school or setting and the individual to whom the equipment is issued may be held accountable for any content or abuse detected.

Any Trust, school or setting equipment that is used outside official premises, for example laptops, should be returned when the employee leaves employment, or upon request by the CEO, Headteacher or setting manager.

7. Confidentiality

Adults are required to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner and to maintain confidentiality.

The deliberate falsification, alteration or unauthorised destruction of documents, including those held electronically, is not acceptable.

As a data controller, Stour Vale Academy Trust is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 ("Data Protection Legislation"). In addition, employees have a common law duty of care to safeguard the welfare of their pupils. This duty is acknowledged in the provisions governing disclosure of information about pupils.

Adults may have access to special category personal data about pupils and their families, which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interests of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them. In circumstances where special category personal data needs to be shared, the Data Protection Legislation contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent. In such cases, adults have a duty to pass the information on without delay to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

Confidential or personal information about a pupil or their family must never be disclosed to anyone other than on a need-to-know basis and advice should be sought prior to disclosure to ensure such disclosure is in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, and the Trust's Privacy Notices. In circumstances where the pupil's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. The information must never be

used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. The information must never be used by anyone for their own or others advantage (including that of partners, friend's relatives or other organisations).

Confidential information about pupils and staff must be held securely. Confidential information about pupils and staff must not be held outside of Stour Vale sites other than on security protected Trust equipment. The information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

If a pupil or parent/carer makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the adult must follow the academy's procedures and the guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Confidentiality must not be promised to the pupil or parent/carer; however, reassurance should be given that the information will be treated sensitively.

If an adult is in any doubt about the storage or sharing of information, they must seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher, Trust Central Team or DPO.

Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to the Headteacher or Trust Central Team.

8. Propriety, Behaviour and appearance

All adults working for, or on behalf of, Stour Vale have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils and the communities we serve. An adult's behaviour or actions, either in or out of the workplace, must not compromise their position within the work setting, or bring Stour Vale into disrepute.

Adults are required to notify an appropriate member of the academy or Trust leadership team immediately of any allegation/s of misconduct that are of a safeguarding nature made against them (or implicating them), by a child or adult in relation to any outside work or interest (whether paid or unpaid) and, of any arrest or criminal charge whether child-related or not. Where employees fail to do so, this will be treated as a serious breach of this Code and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Adults should not:

- Behave in a manner that would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model
- Make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil
- Use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils

- Discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- Make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments that scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such
- Behave in an unsuitable way towards children may result in disqualification from childcare under the Childcare Act 2006, prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice, self-expression, religious and cultural customs. However, adults must maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal appearance at work which promotes a positive and professional image. Clothing and footwear must be safe and clean and take account of health and safety considerations. Adults must ensure they are dressed in ways that are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be religious and culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory. Adults who dress or appear in a manner that may be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or, where the adult is an employee, allegations of misconduct that may lead to action under Stour Vale's Disciplinary Policy.

Personal property of a sexually explicit nature, or property which might be regarded as promoting radicalisation or otherwise inappropriate such as books, magazines, CDs, DVDs or such material on any electronic media including links to such material must not be brought onto Stour Vale Academy Trust premises or downloaded, or stored on any Trust equipment. The Trust respects the right to a private life. However, it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. In their private life employees:

- must refrain from identifying themselves as working for the school, setting and / or Trust, in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the Trust, school or setting into disrepute;
- must not identify other employees, children or young people without their consent;
- must not make any defamatory remarks about the school, setting and / or Trust, its employees, children or young people, or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Trust, school or setting.
- disclose personal data or information about the school, setting and / or Trust, employees, children or young people, that could breach the General Data Protection Regulation (2018);
- must maintain an appropriate professional relationship with pupils and any employee contacted by a pupil outside of work should bring it to

the Headteacher's attention (CEO for employees in the Trust's Central Team, Manager for employees in settings);

The above expectations apply to all environments, including on-line.

9. Social Contact and Social Networking

Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, tablets, text messages, emails, instant messages, websites, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, chatrooms, forums, blogs, apps such as WhatsApp, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, webcams and other handheld devices. Adults should not share any personal information with pupils, and they should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. They should ensure that all communications are transparent and avoid any communication that could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

Adults must not give their personal contact details such as home/mobile phone number; home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed upon in writing with senior management. If, for example, a pupil attempts to locate an adult's personal contact details and attempts to contact or correspond with them, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager or appropriate Senior Leader.

It is recommended that adults ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent pupils from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent pupils from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

Adults are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by us, pupils, parents and carers, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Adults must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected by us and must not post material that damages the reputation of the Trust, or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material that may be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or, in the case of an employee, allegations of misconduct that may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Even where it is made clear that the writer's views on such topics do not represent those of the Trust, such comments are inappropriate.

Adults are advised not to have any online friendships with any young people under the age of 18 unless they are family members or close family friends. Adults are advised not to have online friendships with parents or carers of pupils or members of the Governing Body/Trustees. Where such online friendships exist, adults must ensure appropriate professional boundaries are

maintained.

It is acknowledged that adults may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents or carers of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Adults should, however:

- Inform senior management of any relationship with a parent/carer where this extends beyond the usual parent/carer/professional relationship
- Advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil or parent/carer, which could give rise to concern

- Inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents/carers wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. babysitting, tutoring

- Always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents/carers with senior colleagues, for example, when it is part of a reward scheme.

If a parent/carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise their professional judgment and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny

Some employees may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the employee or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and, where necessary, referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Employees who wish to set up personal web forums, 'blogs', or similar must do so outside of work, must not use school / setting / Trust equipment and must adhere to the points detailed in the paragraph above.

9.1. Criminal actions

Employees of the Trust, and volunteers working in schools and settings must inform their Headteacher or setting manager (Chair of Local Governing Body if the employee is the Headteacher) immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Employees in the Central Team should report any such issues to the CEO (Chair of Trustees if the employee is the CEO).

Those receiving such reports will take advice and consider the implications before taking any action.

Employees who fail to disclose such matters may face disciplinary action for possible gross misconduct, which could lead to them being summarily

dismissed. Similarly, those working in a voluntary capacity may find their role within the school, setting and / or Trust is withdrawn.

10. Links to other documents

10.1. Stour Vale Policies

- Grievance
- Disciplinary
- Whistleblowing
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health & Safety
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy
- Trust Fraud Response Plan

10.2. Other documents

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Academy Trust Handbook
- Stour Vale Financial Handbook
- Teachers Standards

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up in consultation with stakeholders, including Stour Vale member schools, settings and Trades Unions.

The Code will be reviewed every three years, unless legal changes mean an earlier review is needed.

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
Sept 2024		Moved to new Trust format Expanded for additional clarification	Annual review
Sept 2025		Addition of reference to Fraud response plan. Expansion of some references to employees replaced with adults	Annual review. Move to 3 year review cycle.