



Three
Spires
TRUST

'Life in all its fullness'

Staff Code of Conduct

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Aim of this code of conduct

Three Spires Trust expects all children to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment.

Employees of the Trust should ensure that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with colleagues, children, parents and other stakeholders, sets a positive and professional example for children.

We recognise that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This policy forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, along with the associated academy policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to staff members who are:

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

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed by the LA.
- Academy catering staff employed by another organisation.
- Employees of external contractors.
- Employees or volunteers of external agencies.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the academy, for example, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

All staff have a pivotal role to play in every child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through our mission to ensure that every child experience's life in all its fullness, we ensure that we support each child through the promotion of our core Christian values. This mission and our values underpin the work of every member of staff in all of our academies.

1. General Principles

As an employee of Three Spires Trust you are expected to carry out your duties in accordance with the policies and procedures as adopted by the Academy Trust.

You are expected to uphold the following principles:

- Selflessness: your decisions must be taken in terms of the values and mission of the Academy Trust and not in order to gain financial or other material benefits.
- Integrity: you must not place yourself in a situation where your position is compromised.
- Objectivity: all decisions must be made on merit alone.
- Accountability: you must accept accountability for your decisions and actions.
- Openness: you should be as open as possible about all your decisions and actions.
- Honesty: you should declare any private interests relating to your duties and take lawful steps to resolve any conflicts to ensure that public interest is protected.
- Leadership: you must support and promote these principles by example.
- Conduct: you must avoid bringing the Trust into disrepute (e.g. by the use of social networks, the internet or other means be it verbal, activity or otherwise)
- Respect: you must treat others with respect

2. Safeguarding children

In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE), staff members have a responsibility to safeguard children, and protect and promote their welfare. In accordance with "Behaviour in Schools" (DfE), all staff have a duty to create and ensure a safe learning environment for all children and young people.

To effectively safeguard children, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, the academy's Behaviour Policy, and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put children at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.

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

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Child-on-child abuse
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Serious violence
- FGM
- Bullying; this includes online, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Extremism and radicalisation

Copies of policies and a copy of Part One and Annexes A, B and C of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction (SLT will receive the full text). Staff will have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g. abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against children.

In accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a child's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Children requiring mental health support.
- LAC and previously LAC.
- Children with SEND.
- Children who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Children perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Children struggling with mental health needs.
- Children who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Children that are severely and / or persistently absent
- Children who have been suspended on two or more occasions from the academy.

If a staff member identifies a child who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff will be aware of the procedures to follow if a child tells them they are experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect.

In all cases, if a staff member feels unsure as to whether an incident or child would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the DSL or their named deputy. Staff will not assume a colleague will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Each member of staff who witnesses something that could be perceived as a safeguarding concern must report that matter (even if this means that several staff report the same concern).

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the academy, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL or their deputy without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature, including language which could be perceived as being a 'low level' concern.

Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers and supply staff) actions or intent or believes these actions may lead to a child being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the [Managing Allegations against Adults](#) Policy or Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

Sexual abuse (including upskirting) is not tolerated by the academy and any incidents must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police. It is expected that staff will exercise a zero tolerance approach to any perceived sexual harassment or violence (including the use of defamatory language or sexualised

language amongst peers) and that they will sanction the matter, in line with the Behaviour Policy and that they will also report to the DSL or their deputy.

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

If the concern is regarding the Principal, staff will report this to the chair of the **local academy committee or the Chief Executive Officer**.

Staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which will include online safety; additionally, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually.

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

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

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

Staff will be aware that confidentiality must never be promised to a child – staff will understand the procedure for if a child discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be aware of the academy's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

Staff members will themselves inform the Principal if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. **Staff members will self-refer to the Principal any low level concerns about their own conduct (which may include matters which arose out of innocent intentions, ie touching a child on the arm in a busy corridor).**

3. Appearance and dress

The academy expects that staff members will:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the academy.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role.
- Remember that they are role models for children, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to children, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.

4. Attendance/Punctuality

The academy expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
- Refer to the Time Off Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the Managing Attendance at Work Policy when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.
- Attendance and Punctuality will be recorded and monitored by each academy.

5. Equal Opportunities

Three Spires Trust is committed to the promotion and implementation of equal opportunities both internally and externally. The Trust aims to ensure that everyone who it comes into contact with, is treated equally, and not in any way disadvantaged by factors which could prevent the implementation of fair policies and operations. The Trust will recognise the differences which exist and seek to understand the needs of people within the groups which are afforded protection or assistance through the Equality Act 2010.

Three Spires Trust expects all its employees to accept the duty not to discriminate, either in employment practices or in the provision of facilities and services by reference to the 12 protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

6. Professional behaviour and conduct

Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, children, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.

Staff members must follow the Behaviour Policy consistently to ensure that responses are predictable. Staff have a duty to apply reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.

Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the academy into disrepute.

Staff members will inform the Principal if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits. Staff attending a trip or visit will act in accordance with this Code of conduct. Staff supporting any educational visit will be aware that they **must** attend a risk assessment meeting with all other trip staff in advance of the visit taking place.

Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular religious and political views) and the use of academy resources at all times and will not use academy resources for party political purposes.

7. Conduct outside of work

Staff may undertake work outside of their academy, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the academy. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the academy or Trust into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the academy or Trust, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the academy community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

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

8. Smoking, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke (cigarettes or e-cigarettes) on, or within a 50m radius of, any academy premises.

Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising children off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

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

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

9. Health and safety

Staff members will:

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

10. Declaration of interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with could be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the academy. Staff must not privately tutor children who attend their own academy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the Principal for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

11. Relationships with children

The trust expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with children at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Use appropriate tone of voice and language when speaking with children.
- Use appropriate tone and language when documenting incidents that involve children.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with children: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children.
- Only contact children via the academy's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact children.

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

12. Physical contact with children

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

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

Staff will seek the child's permission, where possible, before initiating contact. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between children. As such, the child's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account. Staff will never touch a child in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with children.

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

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

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

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the child's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. **Staff members may consider documenting these actions as "action taken" when reporting and recording safeguarding and welfare matters.**

Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with children for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the Positive Handling Policy.

13. Showering and changing

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

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

Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow children to maintain their privacy.

Staff will never change or shower in the same area as children.

14. Transporting children

When it is necessary to transport children off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured. Staff will consult with the Driving at Work Policy and ensure all necessary documentation is complete.

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

Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns. Children will not travel in the front of the vehicle.

15. Financial inducements

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the academy's financial regulations.
- Declare to the governing board, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
 - › Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
 - › Non-excessive gifts offered by parents or children to academy staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts.
 - › Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
- Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the academy's business, which shall be at the academy's expense.
- Declare any gift that cannot be returned to the governing board, who will decide how it will be used.
- Only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the governing board.

16. Acceptable use of technology

Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement at all times.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse. Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that children are using technology appropriately while under their care.

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

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

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

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

17. Premises, equipment and communication

Academy equipment and systems are available only for academy-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the Principal.

Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of academy equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the Principal.

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

Communication systems may be accessed when the academy suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the systems manager, only with the permission of the governing board.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the Principal or systems manager. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Academy equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the academy when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the Principal.

Professional email accounts should not be accessed via personal devices, especially not mobile telephones as 'saved accounts' – this is to protect the data and subject matter, and to protect staff wellbeing.

18. Photography and videos

Photographs and videos will only be taken using academy equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is strictly prohibited.

Consent for taking photographs will be obtained from parents, or the child themselves, if they are deemed old enough and able to make the decision for themselves.

The age of consent that is legislated is 13 and above; however, this is only applicable for online services provided directly to children. For everything else, an appropriate age of consent is considered on a case-by-case basis by the DPO, Principal and a child's parents (where appropriate).

Children who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or be filmed will have their wishes respected.

The Principal will be notified of the proposed use of the imagery or video and the equipment and ensure that the use of such is included in lesson plans where this is necessary.

All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny, and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.

Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.

19. Data protection and confidentiality

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

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

Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the academy, its employees or the LA to other parties.

The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.

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

20. Probity of records

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications or legal documents, is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

21. Contacts

Staff members will not use academy business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-academy activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

22. Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the CEO and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date of this document is September 2026.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document.