



Staff Code of Conduct Policy

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GOAL: This Staff Code of Conduct serves as a cornerstone framework outlining the behavioural expectations for all employees within ARTS Education. Its creation underscores our unwavering commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and joyful learning environment for all students. Recognising the influential role staff play as role models, the Code emphasises adherence to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct, as delineated within the Independent School Standards.

1. Introduction

This policy extends to all support staff, governors, and volunteers, reaffirming their critical role in upholding the school's ethos of "A.R.T.S.: To Create, Self worth Opportunities & Compassion." This guiding principle emphasises nurturing students' development through fostering self-worth, providing meaningful opportunities, and cultivating compassion within the school community.

It is paramount to underscore that failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action as outlined in established staff disciplinary procedures policy. However, this Code extends beyond a mere set of rules. It serves as a compass guiding staff to navigate any unforeseen situations with professional judgement and unwavering commitment to the best interests of the school and its students. This collaborative approach, rooted in mutual respect and shared responsibility, fuels our endeavour to cultivate a truly thriving learning environment where every individual feels empowered to contribute positively to the development of our future generations.

As employees we have a responsibility to keep children/young people safe whilst they are in our care. Equally so there is a duty of care to all staff employed within A.R.T.S School. It is therefore imperative that the following procedures and policies are followed by all of us. Staff should also follow the guidance in the Safeguarding Policy, Promoting Good Behaviour Policy, and Anti Bullying Policy.

2. Ethos and Environment

- The school is a place where 'Every Child Matters'.
- The environment is welcoming and pleasant and students, staff and visitors are greeted appropriately.
- The school makes a commitment to address wellbeing needs before educational needs. This is to naturally promote the likelihood of a child's readiness scale to learn.
- Achievements and progress are regularly celebrated and students have high expectations of themselves and others and understand that long-term goals are worth working for.
- students feel valued and are open and confident in their relationships with staff and one another.
- students' work is displayed and changed regularly.

3. Legislation and Guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/student relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

4. General staff obligations to students

Maintaining appropriate boundaries with students is paramount, ensuring our interactions uphold the highest standards of professionalism and transparency. Staff actions and interactions should always reflect their role and avoid any behaviour that could be misconstrued. One-on-one meetings, when necessary, must occur in public areas with clear visibility and be communicated to a colleague or supervisor. Minimising personal contact outside school hours, unless on agreed extra curricular activities, and refraining from sharing personal information, including social media profiles, is crucial. Finally, any concerns about potential misinterpretations of interactions or observed inappropriate behaviour from colleagues must be reported immediately following our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. (Sections 6 to 13 below explain staff conduct requirements for specific circumstances in more detail.) Through collective adherence to these guidelines, we cultivate a safe and responsible learning environment where students and staff can thrive, fostered by transparency and unwavering commitment to safeguarding.

ARTS Education staff obligations to students:

- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school.
- Treat students with dignity and respect.
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

5. General staff obligations to other staff

Building a positive and respectful workplace starts with all of us. Maintain professionalism in interactions, prioritise clear communication, and avoid crossing boundaries. Address disagreements constructively and utilise proper channels. Report any concerns about conduct that may create discomfort. Remember, a strong and

supportive staff team contributes directly to a thriving learning environment for everyone.

ARTS Education staff obligations to other staff:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality.
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school.
- Treat other staff members with dignity and respect.
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermine other staff members in front of or away from students.
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- Report any concerns about staff conduct to senior leadership immediately (in the event of your concerns being related to the conduct of a senior learnership team member, contact the board of Governors.

6. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard students from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available on the staff shared drive, as well as in the policies section of our school website. New staff will also be instructed to review our child protection and safeguarding policies either in physical form or via the staff shared drive or website.

The safety of the young people in our care is of paramount importance to us at all times. Stringent efforts are made during recruitment to ensure that you are only appointed to our organisation if we are confident that there are no concerns about you in relation to safeguarding young people, if your status in relation to this changes at any time or an

Everyone at A.R.T.S School is responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of our students at all times. If staff, parents/carers, volunteers, students, visitors require further advice or guidance in helping them to do this, the key designated people for safeguarding are:

- **Head of School - Annmarie Read**
- **Deputy Head - Katie McCarthy**
- **Designated Safeguarding leads - Joanne Briody-Skinner and Amanda Johnson**

7. Communication and Social Media

Safeguarding our students online is paramount at A.R.T.S. While personal social media profiles are permissible, staff must ensure limited accessibility by utilising privacy settings and avoiding full names to prevent student identification. Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites/mediums which may bring themselves or our school into disrepute.

Engaging with students, parents, or carers via social media is strictly prohibited, with immediate reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead mandatory. Similarly, initiating contact with families outside school for personal connections is forbidden.

All staff must be familiar with the school's online safety policy and disclose any pre-existing relationships with parents or students to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead so that clear and safe parameters for social media use and contact can be agreed by all parties.

Sharing any online images of students without their consent is absolutely unacceptable.

By adhering to these guidelines, we create a safe and responsible online environment for everyone, where responsible social media use contributes directly to safeguarding our students and upholding the school's values.

NB For greater detail of safeguarding guidance for staff use of social media, you must read appendix 1.

8. Acceptable use of technology

Responsible technology use underpins our commitment to a safe and professional environment at ARTS Education. Staff are strictly prohibited from accessing or engaging with any illegal, inappropriate, or potentially offensive material on school IT systems, including emails, websites, or gambling platforms. This extends to pornography and other unsuitable content. Additionally, personal mobile phone usage during school hours or in front of students is restricted to designated areas like the staff room.

Personal devices should never be used to capture student images without consent and adherence to established policies. This is potentially a minefield. Is there any way you could provide staff with several school digital cameras/cheap school phones for the purpose of capturing student images so that you can write - personal devices should never be used to capture student images in any situation? Please note that the school reserves the right to monitor emails and internet activity on all school IT systems to ensure compliance with these guidelines. By upholding these protocols, we collectively contribute to a secure and responsible digital environment for everyone within our school community. Is it possible to monitor personal staff laptop usage if they are

connected to the internet? If so, maybe add in a sentence to this effect. Ideally staff will use work laptops only within school and for school work but this is a massive funding commitment.

Electronic devices, whether personal or school owned, should never be used to record students, staff or any other stakeholders without seeking their permission first and without a valid reason. (For example to record their work using Dragon Voice Recognition Software etc)

(See filtering and monitoring policy and acceptable use of technology policy for more information)

9. Gifts and rewards

If you receive a gift from a student/parent/carer you should declare the gift where there is a possibility it could be misconstrued, or in any event where the gift is of a value of more than £10. The Proprietors may in their absolute discretion require you to decline the gift if deemed inappropriate. You must decline outright gifts that could be perceived as a bribe or that have created an expectation of preferential treatment.

Staff should never buy items for or give gifts to students or their family members on a personal level. Gifts that are agreed as part of a reward system must be given with prior agreement / knowledge of senior leaders and appropriate records kept. This ensures that the giving of rewards is not misconstrued as grooming and also that students do not favour some members of staff over others.

In the event of a child being on a school trip and having forgotten their spending money or dinner money etc, attempts should be made to contact parents/carers and school leaders to agree a solution before purchasing food or items for the learner. If you are unable to contact parents/carers or school leaders by phone you should:

- Discuss the situation with another member of staff on the trip and agree on a solution
- Leave a voicemail or send an email to school leaders explaining the situation and your solution.

Any gifts, rewards or loans of money that are not declared could be perceived as potential evidence of grooming and will be treated according to our safeguarding policy and staff disciplinary policy.

10. Confidentiality

As staff members entrusted with sensitive information about the school, its personnel, students, and families, we uphold the highest standards of confidentiality. This information must never be:

- Disclosed: Unless legally required or explicitly consented to by the respective parties.
- Misused: For any purpose beyond its intended collection and designated use. This includes avoiding its use to humiliate, embarrass, or blackmail others.

Remember, this commitment to confidentiality does not supersede the critical duty to report suspected child harm or risk, as outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Furthermore, any known use of such information that contravenes the above principles will be subject to disciplinary procedures. We are committed to maintaining a safe and professional environment, and upholding confidentiality is vital to achieving this goal.

11. Honesty and Integrity

Staff are to consistently demonstrate high standards of honesty and integrity in every aspect of their role. This applies to interactions with students, financial matters (money handling, expense claims), and responsible use of school property and facilities.

Zero Tolerance for Bribery: Accepting bribes is strictly prohibited. Gifts exceeding £10 in value must be declared and recorded in the designated register.

Transparency in Information: Providing accurate information to the school is paramount. This encompasses:

- Background details (including any past/current investigations or conduct-related cautions outside school)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Any updates to the provided information necessitate prompt notification to the school. The nature and context of the update will be assessed to determine its potential impact on your employment.

By adhering to these principles, we foster a trustworthy and ethical environment where integrity forms the bedrock of our professional conduct.

12. Conduct outside of work

A.R.T.S employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of A.R.T.S or the staff member's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community. A.R.T.S recognises the concept of 'transferable risk' outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education relating to behaviours outside of the work environment that have an impact on the ability to work within a school setting.

Staff should not contact students outside of official working hours or school sanctioned extra-curricular activities unless in exceptional circumstances and only via academy communication equipment (e.g., a company mobile phone or work email account). Staff should never contact students via a private/personal phone, by letter, and/or email account or any other electronic medium.

In accordance with safeguarding best practice and guidance, staff are strongly advised against social contact with ex-students. Issues around potential influence having held a Position of Trust makes such contact difficult to manage or moderate. If contact needs to be established then this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for review, advice and guidance.

13. Staff Dress Code

Just as we encourage students to display their personality through their clothing (See our uniform policy) we encourage our staff to uphold similar values while ensuring practicality for our dynamic school environment. Here are key guidelines:

- Attire: Clothing should be appropriate, avoiding excessive revealing elements.
- Footwear: Choose footwear that facilitates safe movement and physical activity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Slogans: Never wear clothing displaying offensive or politically charged messages.
- School Apparel: Wearing designated school tops and tracksuits is permitted.
- Leggings: Staff opting for leggings or sports leggings must combine them with tops, skirts, or shorts that extend at least 2 inches above the knee.

14. Training Requirements

Line managers should ensure all their reportees read the Code of Conduct as part of the annual safeguarding declaration process.

The Leadership team will ensure that staff are sign posted to the Code of Conduct as part of the induction process for new staff.

15. Responsibilities

If you are a manager, you have a responsibility to set a good example through your behaviour and attitudes, especially in relation to upholding the A.R.T.S Ethos, obligations and standards as set in this Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles of Public Life, which are:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

(Please see Appendix 2 for further details on each principle. You should ensure that you understand your responsibilities under all relevant legislation and policies and procedures).

16. Collaboration and Feedback

We value open communication and encourage students and parents/guardians to share their feedback.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

We review the effectiveness of our policy and practices yearly through student feedback, parent feedback and staff reflection.

18. Conclusion

This Staff Code of Conduct serves as a cornerstone for fostering a professional, respectful, and productive environment at ARTS Education. By adhering to its outlined principles and embracing the spirit of shared responsibility, we can cultivate a space where students thrive, staff feel valued and empowered, and the pursuit of excellence becomes our collective endeavour. Remember, upholding these standards extends beyond compliance; it reflects our commitment to the ethical obligations entrusted upon us as educators and guardians of young minds. As we navigate the complexities of our

roles, let this code be a guiding light, reminding us of the values we uphold and the positive impact we strive to make together.

19. Links to Other Policies

Staff wellbeing policy

Staff Grievance policy

Staff Disciplinary Policy

Social and Emotional Understanding policy

Health and safety policy

Filtering and monitoring policy

Equality policy

Dealing with abusive people policy

Capability of staff policy

Anti bullying policy

Allegations against staff policy

Acceptable use of technology policy

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Guidance for Use of Social Media by Staff

Whilst social media in all its forms keeps us connected to the wider world in so many positive ways, it does present additional 'challenges' to us all. It is strongly recommended that you take every opportunity to lock down the security settings on all your accounts so that your identity, your data, and your reputation are as protected as much as possible. Please consider the following:

- Ensure your settings make your profile accessible to friends and family only, and not seen by everyone. This will stop people being able to see your messages and pictures and screen shotting them for other uses.
- Use your middle name instead of your first name so that you are not easy to find on any search engines.
- In your profile do not mention your place of work and make it a personal policy never to talk about your work (even the good things).
- Be wary of 'friend' requests – only accept the ones that you are absolutely sure are not connected with your work. You should not be friends with students, parents, or ex-students.
- Be wary of 'friend' requests from work colleagues – check out in person that the request is genuine. Nationally there have been cases of students creating fake accounts using teachers' names and pictures, then soliciting comments and messages on school events. Teachers have been caught out negatively commenting on staff performance etc, only for it to be revealed that they had been 'cat fished' and the comments circulated.
- Remember the A.R.T.S monitoring & filtering software installed on our devices will track and flag any inappropriate use.
- Consider the principle of 'transferrable risk,' meaning that events that happen outside of working hours can have a direct impact on your working life i.e., if an incident occurs that demonstrates you may not be suitable to work with children. This principle can mean that events are referred to the LADO for investigation.

Everyone thinks this will not happen to them and is surprised when it does. Please take 5 minutes to ensure that your on-line profile and footprint is as secure as it can be.

You are expected to demonstrate safe and responsible online behaviours and should:

- ensure that your own personal social networking sites are set as private and ensure that students are not approved contacts;
- never use or access or communicate via social networking profiles/blogs of students
- never accept messages, friend requests, requests to connect or similar from students, parents/carers (unless you are the parent, grandparent or legal guardian of that child);
- do not use internet or web-based communication channels other than those provided by A.R.T.S to send messages to students;

- do not use your own equipment (e.g. mobile telephones) to communicate with students - use equipment provided by A.R.T.S;
- where contact with students is required outside of normal school hours ensure that parents, guardians or carers have given permission and that it is via A.R.T.S communication equipment;
- only make contact with students for professional reasons.
- Employees should not upload any content on to social media sites that:
 - is confidential to the school/trust or its staff
 - amounts to bullying
 - amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
 - brings the school into disrepute
 - contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips
 - undermines the reputation of the school and/or individuals
 - is defamatory or knowingly false
 - breaches copyright
 - is in any other way unlawful.
 - Employees must not use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or air any other internal grievances.
 - Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
 - Do not engage in any conduct (using personal insults, obscenities) which would not be acceptable in the workplace.
 - Do not use social media to 'whistleblow' – raise concerns through the proper channels which would entitle you to legal protection (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)
 - Employees should note that the use of social media accounts during lesson time is not permitted.

Appendix 2: The Nolan Principles of Public Life

Introduced in 1995 by the UK government, Committee on Standards in Public Life, these important values are enshrined in codes of conduct across the public sector, from schools and government departments to hospitals:

- **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.