



ALEC REED ACADEMY
PROUD TO LEARN

Code of Safeguarding and Professional Conduct for Staff

Purpose

Relationships between staff and pupils at the Alec Reed Academy are friendly and mutually respectful. This Code has been formulated in order to maintain this balance.

The purpose of the code is to:

- confirm and reinforce the professional responsibilities of staff
- clarify the legal position in relation to sensitive aspects of staff/pupil relationships
- set out the expectations of standards to be maintained within the Academy

It is hoped that staff will be reassured by this code. It will in the vast majority of cases simply confirm good professional practice. Its purpose is to promote the highest standards of care for young people and to protect staff from the potentially devastating consequences of false allegations, without compromising bona-fide school activities.

Although this Code of Conduct gives advice and instruction on how to deal with specific situations, it should not replace professional common sense and good judgement. In all matters relating to pupil staff relationships, teachers and non-teaching staff must bear in mind how an action might reasonably be regarded by a third party.

All staff should understand the need to act as a good role models for pupils. The Academy expects its staff to behave in a thoroughly professional manner and to set an example to pupils through high standards of behaviour.

1. Staff/Pupil/Former Pupil Contact

As a general rule, staff should avoid unnecessary contact with pupils outside school.

- They should not give pupils their home address, mobile or home phone number, or non-school e-mail address without good cause. If the address/contact details of a member of staff become inadvertently known to a pupil or group of pupils the Associate Principal S+FS must be informed so that action can be taken to protect the privacy of the member of staff
- They should not make arrangements to meet pupils, individually or in groups, outside school other than on school trips authorised by the Principal.
- They should avoid contacting pupils at home unless this is strictly necessary; they should keep a record of any such occasion.
- They should not give a pupil a lift in their own vehicle other than on school business and with permission from the Principal/Associate Principal.
- They should not attend private pupil parties and should be aware of their professional standing and responsibilities when attending parties arranged by parents at which pupils are also present.

Some pupils may be reluctant to end the close working relationship they have enjoyed with members of staff. However, it is important to remember that when a pupil leaves school the professional duty of care ends and remains solely with the parents/carers. Although pupils may request meetings with staff for help with university applications, gap year advice or references for future careers, these meetings and any associated correspondence should be conducted at the Academy within office hours and in a professional manner.

If you are in any doubt regarding appropriate contact with a current or former pupil you should seek advice from a member of the Leadership Team.

Members of staff who are parents of pupils, friends with parents of pupils or who, for example, are voluntary workers in youth organisations attended by pupils, will of course have contact with pupils outside school. However, they should still use their professional judgement to respect the spirit of this code.

2. Language

Staff should not swear, blaspheme or use any sort of offensive language in front of pupils. They should not use language which is discriminatory and demeaning in relation to gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or age. Staff should not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature (other than in the context of the curriculum as specified in Schemes of Learning)

3. Physical Contact

In nearly all cases physical contact between pupils and staff is inappropriate. The only possible circumstances where physical contact may occur are outlined below:

a) **Reasonable force** (see the Academy policy on the Use of Reasonable Force)

By law, staff may use such force or physical contact as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence;
- injuring themselves or others;
- causing significant damage to property, including their own;

This applies when a member of staff is on Academy premises and when he or she is in control or charge of the pupil elsewhere, for example on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

It only applies where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene. Any force used must always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and must be appropriate for the age, sex and understanding of the pupil.

Before intervening physically a teacher must, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. The member of staff must continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and must make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

Staff must always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. The member of staff involved must inform the Principal/Associate Principals immediately following an incident where force has been used. This is to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful in the event of a complaint. The member of staff must provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. The Associate Principal S+FS should also be informed of

incidents where (i) a teacher considered the use of force may have been necessary or where (ii) a teacher threatened a pupil with the use of force.

b) Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency

The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

c) Contact in other situations

There are a few situations where physical contact may be proper or necessary. Some physical contact may, for example, be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE, drama or sports coaching.

All staff must be alert to the possibilities of any contact being misinterpreted. To avoid such misunderstanding, all planned contact must be demonstrably unavoidable. It may be that alternative methods involving demonstrations of particular techniques by the teacher or a particularly competent pupil may be more appropriate than modifying a pupil's technique by physical contact.

If staff still feel it proper or necessary for physical contact to occur, then the following guidelines must be observed.

- (i) Explain the intended action to the pupil;
 - (ii) Do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction;
 - (iii) Ensure that other pupils or colleagues are present during the demonstration;
- If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred during the demonstration, inform the Associate Principal S+FS without delay, and make a written record.

Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Staff should be particularly cautious when changing and cleaning young children following a toilet accident and should always have another member of staff present. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the pupil. Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time.

4. Isolation

If a teacher is alone with a pupil he/she should ensure that any such meeting is as visible as possible. As such he/she should ensure that the door to the room has a glass panel or is left open. If this is not possible then another adult must be close by. Teachers should not offer to tutor pupils at home.

5. Relationships

We best serve the pupils in our care by a pastoral approach that is concerned, collective and thorough, but professionally detached. We do not serve pupils or parents well by encouraging situations in which pupils develop excessive reliance on individual teachers.

All teachers have a relationship of trust with all pupils by virtue of their position and the work they undertake. This relationship of trust must not be distorted by fear or favour and those in positions of trust must exercise responsibility as a consequence of the power they have over those they teach and /or care for. Where a relationship of trust exists, allowing a relationship to develop in a way that might lead to a sexual relationship is wrong.

It is unacceptable for a member of staff to have any kind of sexual or intimate relationships /contact with a pupil of any age or to encourage such relationships/contact. Such relationships /contact are a

breach of trust and professional standards even where the pupil is over 18. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence for a teacher to involve a pupil under 18 in a sexual activity.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

Staff must respect the privacy of pupils, parents and colleagues and must not pass information about, for example, addresses or telephone numbers to others, without checking first with the person concerned.

Information about pupils, parents or colleagues must never be disclosed to telephone enquirers. You should ask the enquirer to put the request in writing so that it can be dealt with appropriately.

7. Comments and Discussions with Pupils

Staff must avoid comments to or about pupils which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for staff to encourage debate and discussion between groups of pupils, which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones, which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme. Schemes of Learning should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity. Specific guidance may be needed to assist newly qualified or other teachers who are new to this area of work. This will call for the exercise of careful judgment in responding to questions raised by pupils.

Notwithstanding the advice given above it is recognised that, in order to discharge particular pastoral responsibilities, staff may from time to time need to engage in conversation with pupils which cover sensitive matters. Staff must use their professional judgement to ensure that they are not drawn into areas inappropriate to their duties or their relationship with the pupils concerned. Staff must also use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.

The persistent and hurtful use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people can also be regarded as a form of abuse which is potentially very damaging and must be avoided. In particular staff must not make any racist, sexist or homophobic comments.

8. Infatuations and Crushes

These unfortunately do develop and can involve pupils and teachers and other members of staff of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. They need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions have been known to provoke false accusations. It is therefore in the interest of all parties to avoid adding to the pupil's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. In such situations the advice of a senior colleague **must** be sought.

Other members of staff have a part to play, too, in alerting a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation in order that appropriate steps can be taken to minimise hurt and distress and the risk to the teacher or member of staff concerned. Whilst the risk of infatuation is not limited to younger members of staff, new teachers must recognise their particular vulnerability to adolescent infatuation. If a member of staff is concerned that he/she is developing a friendship with a pupil which would have the potential to become an unacceptable relationship (see 5 above), he/she must ensure that the relationship does not develop further.

9. Out of School and After School Activities

Staff must take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. The more relaxed relationships that may promote successful activities can be misinterpreted by young people. It is important to emphasise that the standards of professional conduct and behaviour expected of staff are no different from those which apply within school. Staff

should be aware of the particular care which should be taken with older, more mature students in these circumstances.

10. Teaching Materials

The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature, particularly in relation to language or sexual behaviour must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. There must always, therefore, be a clear link with the scheme of learning.

11. Reporting Incidents

Members of staff must report any concerns they may have following any incident where s/he feels that his / her actions may have been misinterpreted. This report must be made to the Associate Principal S+FS as soon as possible after the incident and should include as an immediate follow up the preparation of a written note of the incident, a copy of which must be given to the Associate Principal S+FS.

12. Personal letters, gifts and electronic communication

Staff should usually only write letters or send emails to individual pupils about routine matters of academic study or pastoral care, congratulations on recent achievements or other purely professional issues.

Members of staff should not give presents to an individual pupil (as opposed to small gifts such as confectionary to a whole group) outside of the Academy rewards system. If a member of staff believes it to be necessary to write a personal note or give a present to an individual pupil, s/he should discuss the purpose and context with a senior colleague, who should refer to the Associate Principal S+FS if they require further advice.

All staff using e-mail need to be aware of the less formal style that can characterise this form of communication and should ensure that e-mails do not convey an inappropriate tone. Repeated e-mail communication is a particular cause for concern, as it can spiral out of control almost un-noticed by those conducting it.

13. Internet access and social networking

Members of staff must not access or attempt to access any sites that contain any of the following: child abuse; pornography; promoting discrimination of any kind; promoting racial or religious hatred; promoting illegal acts; any other information which may be illegal or offensive to colleagues. Inadvertent access must be treated as an e-safety incident, reported to their line manager and an incident sheet completed.

Social networking is allowed in the Academy in accordance with the e-safety policy only. Staff should **not** become "friends" with parents or pupils on personal social networks.

Members of staff should keep passwords private. There is **no** occasion when a password needs to be shared with another member of staff or pupil.

14. The Use of Cameras and Video Recordings by Pupils and staff

Members of staff and pupils should not use personal equipment in the Academy for the purpose of taking photographs or video footage, unless being used as a learning resource and in agreement with the curriculum/subject leader. This includes the use of personal mobile phones.

The only exception to this is on an Academy trip or visit where pupils may be allowed to take photographs for their own personal use. Members of staff should only take photographs of pupils where they are to be used to positively promote progress and achievement and the Academy. All members of staff must ensure that all images are available for scrutiny and be able to justify any images in their possession.

Members of staff need to make it clear to all pupils that any images should be taken responsibly and not used to upset any other pupil or member of staff.

The use of images to bully or intimidate, including publishing photographs or video footage without permission on the internet, will be dealt with in line with the Academy's behaviour and anti-bullying policies and may be viewed as a criminal offence.

15. Alcohol

All staff should be aware that the Academy expressly forbids the consumption of alcohol by pupils.

Members of staff have a professional duty to set a responsible example to pupils. Most pupils have mobile recording and photographic technology to hand therefore members of staff should not put themselves in a position which may compromise their professional status.

On the occasion that members of staff are socialising in groups, in public locations, it is important that professional standards are maintained and no opportunity is given to the pupils to compromise these. If teachers become aware that Academy pupils are socialising in the same venue staff are encouraged to consider changing their plans. There may be times when this is difficult, for example at a restaurant, and in these circumstances, staff are strongly advised to be aware of their behaviour.

Teachers must maintain the highest professional standards at school social events and they must not continue to socialise with pupils after the official finishing time or at alternative locations.

Teachers must not drink alcohol on school premises unless at an approved Academy function.

16. Child Protection Investigations

If an allegation is made of physical or sexual abuse against a teacher, then the Principal will for legal reasons report this immediately to the LADO (local authority designated officer), the Police and Social Services will be called in without prior internal investigation.

17. Approved Academy Social Events

If the Academy organises a social event which is to take place on site and at which alcohol is to be served then alcohol may only be consumed in moderation by attending members of staff, and at least one teacher must be designated as being on duty and therefore alcohol free.

At the end of the Academy year a prom is organised. Legally this event is regarded as an Academy event. As such, staff who attend this or any other event have a duty of care towards pupils and must act in a professional manner in accordance with the staff code of conduct. Staff must remain alcohol free.

I have read and understand the Academy Code of Safeguarding and Professional Conduct for Staff.

Name **Signature** **Date**