

Aspire Academy
Staff Code of Conduct Policy
September 2022



The LGC has agreed that this policy will be reviewed every year. This review will take into consideration all aspects of applicable legislation and advice current at the time of the review. The next 'Period of Review' will be **SEPTEMBER 2023**.

Our Ethos and Values

At Aspire our ethos is to develop the individual moulding independent learners and confident young minds.

We aspire to be a community founded upon mutual trust where everyone is loved and respected for who they are. We believe that in working together we can accomplish more than we could alone.

Values:

As an Alternative Provision Academy, our core values are empathy, courage and community:

- **Empathy** is essential to human life and lies at the heart of all successful relationships. Empathy is an unspoken language that we aim to teach and develop in others. In this way we develop self-awareness and depth of human engagement;
- **Courage** is a trait that needs to be developed in everyone. Life throws many challenges at us and we need to be prepared to face those challenges through developing deep personal reserves. We believe that developing individual strength and conviction enables students for the rest of their lives;
- We aim to be an **inclusive community**. Each person is needed, valued and important. When things go wrong we will forgive each other and make a fresh start. We will share what we have with those in need and try to treat others as we would like them to treat us.

Aims

As an Alternative Provision Academy, we aim to:

- Treat learners, staff and visitors with respect;
- Incorporate and promote the values behind the academy in all we do;
- Instil a sense of self-worth and value in every learner;
- Encourage learner participation in the planning and the running of our Academy wherever possible;
- Encourage emotional literacy as a way of interpreting the world around us;
- Encourage, challenge and support every person to achieve his or her potential.

Introduction

This document sets out clear expectations and guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Aspire Academy. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring. As a member of the academy community, each member of staff has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the academy.

This includes conduct inside or outside of working hours.

Academy staff are in a unique *position of trust* and influence as role models for vulnerable student/s within the academy. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets and maintains a good example to all student/s within the academy at all times, irrespective of personal opinion. This includes interactions and tensions between staff as well as staff to students.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the academy, regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:

- All members of staff including teaching and support staff;
- Volunteers, including governors;
- Casual workers;
- Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly;
- Student placements, including those undertaking initial teacher training and apprentices.

Aspire Academy requires that all staff have read and agree to comply with this policy.

Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in action being taken under the academy disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.

This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. Staff working within a professional environment are expected to already have a sound understanding of professional expectations and conduct. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy, staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the student/s and the academy.

This Code of Conduct assists all staff members to clarify and understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Setting an example

All staff who work in schools or academies set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Staff must therefore:

- Avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- Avoid discussing inappropriate topics within the academy. This includes topics of a personal nature which could be overheard by any stakeholder.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our students to do the same.
- Avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct through unprofessional or informal behaviours.

Child Protection

- All staff have a duty to prevent and protect students from: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional abuse and

neglect at all times by adhering to the following,

- The duty to protect and prevent students includes; the duty to report concerns regarding a student/s to the academy's Child Protection Coordinator by recording the concern onto CPOMS immediately.
- The Academy's designated Child Protection Coordinator is Claire Boyton or Maxine Lane
- Queries and advice regarding Child Protection must be emailed to the cboyton@asp.hslt.com or mlane@asp.hslt.com.
- Staff are expected to attend the necessary training in regards to Child Protection, staff will be contacted accordingly.
- Staff are expected to thoroughly read and understand the Child Protection updates that are distributed to academy staff.
- **All documentation and information received in regards to Child Protection must be treated with professionalism and confidentiality at all times.** This must not be discussed where it can be overheard at any time.
- Staff are expected to be fully confident and compliant within the Child Protection Policy and procedures in place.
- For further guidance within Child Protection please email cboyton@asp.hslt.com or mlane@asp.hslt.com, or please refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding

- All staff have a duty to ensure Safeguarding is monitored and adhered to at all times, this means providing and ensuring a safe environment for all students, staff and other members of the academy community, whilst preventing possible Safeguarding situations by adhering to the following,
- All safeguarding concerns must be emailed promptly to cboyton@asp.hslt.com; staff must not assume a colleague has reported a concern on your behalf.
- Concerns and complaints received by any form of communication must be redirected to the Safeguarding Team to resolve and inform SLT accordingly.
- All staff must ensure you are compliant and up to date in any training and information declarations that are sent by the Safeguarding Team and Human Resources.
- Staff must ensure authorisation is sought from Mrs Claire Boyton in regards to regular visitors, volunteers, external mentors in regards to DBS authorisation.
- Staff are expected to be fully confident and compliant within the Safeguarding and Whistleblowers' Policy.
- Staff must take the utmost care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare at all times.
- For further guidance within Safeguarding please email cboyton@asp.hslt.com or please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

Guidelines for Staff- *Safeguarding continued*

Private meetings with students

- Staff and volunteers should be aware that private meetings with individual students might give rise to concern. There will be occasions when a confidential interview or a one to one meeting is necessary. However, such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people, and another student or adult should be present or nearby. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- Meetings with students away from the academy premises should only be arranged with the specific approval of the Academy Principal.
- Meetings or communication with students away from the academy premises that are not pre-agreed must be

reported to cboyton@asp.hslt.com immediately and logged on CPOMS

Physical contact with students

- Physical contact with students is strongly discouraged and should be the exception rather than the norm.
- Government guidance on the Reasonable Use of Force, explains that all staff have the power to use force to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain or control a student he/she should complete a RPI form and follow Team Teach procedure.
- Any form of physical punishment of students is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour. It is particularly important that staff understand this is to protect both their own position and the overall reputation of the academy.

Where physical contact may be acceptable

- There may be occasions where a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comfort such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen to be by others present, does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same student over a period of time.
- Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with students from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include: showing a student how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment; demonstrating a move or exercise during games or PE. Staff should ensure such contact is conducted appropriately, and limited as much as possible, in order to reduce the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

Caring for students with particular problems

- Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another student or staff member is present or in an open viewable space if appropriate.
- Wherever possible, staff who have to help student/s with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another member of staff, and students should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves. It is accepted that there will be some situations where students will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis will be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

Relationships and attitudes

All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate and professional boundaries in their dealings with students.

- Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and students will be regarded as a grave breach of trust, and any sexual activity between a member of staff and any student at the academy is a criminal offence.
- All staff should ensure that their relationships with students are appropriate to the age and gender of the students, and care should be taken that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanours and language all require care and thought.
- From time to time staff may encounter students who display attention-seeking behaviour, or profess to be attracted to them. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. In these circumstances, the member of staff should also ensure that the Academy Principal or a senior colleague is aware of the situation promptly.
- Staff should act respectfully towards students at all times. They should speak in a calm and objective way, model good manners and take seriously what students tell them. They should try to settle conflicts in a fair and objective manner, dealing with current behaviour only, and not consider or refer to past behaviour, unless

directly relevant.

- Staff must not demean or undermine students, their parents/ carers or colleagues at any time. Nor should staff compare student behaviour to that of a student's sibling or other family member.

Where conversation of a sensitive nature may be appropriate

- Many staff have a pastoral responsibility for students and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion.
- Other staff in the academy may, from time to time, be approached by students for advice. Students may also appear distressed and staff may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases, staff must judge whether it is appropriate for them to offer guidance and advice or whether to refer the student to another member of staff with acknowledged pastoral responsibility for the particular student or report to the appropriate system for example CPOMS.

Inappropriate comments and discussions with students

- As with physical contact, comments by staff to students, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. Therefore, as a general principle staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about students which may be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst students in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstance.
- Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments are also unacceptable.

Extra-curricular activities

- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising students in extra-curricular activities, or a residential setting, such as an outdoor education camp or extended visit away from home. Typically, a less formal approach than usual may be appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation. In any event, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within the academy.
- Staff should take care in receiving or giving gifts to students, which could be misunderstood. Gifts to individual students from staff will be the exception. Inappropriate gifts from students should be reported to the Academy Principal. All gifts must be recorded in line with academy policy.

Student development

- Staff must comply with academy policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of students.
- Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of students.
- Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of students.

Honesty and Integrity

- Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of academy property and facilities.
- All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or

accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for Aspire Academy.

- For further guidance and information, please refer to the Expenses policy, Gift and Hospitality Policy.
- For further guidance and information on the Bribery Act 2010 please refer to; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bribery-act-2010-guidance>

Social Media & Technology

- Staff must not use any personal recording devices or technology applications as a camera in the academy.
- Any approved work related photographs/videos must be taken using academy equipment; ensuring students have signed permission from parents/carers.
- Staff must only save images and videos on academy devices, **any other images MUST NOT leave the premises.**
- Staff should not use their mobile phones for non-academy-related matters in the academy during their directed (paid) hours of employment. Outside these times, mobile phones should only be used in areas of the academy where students are not present.
- Staff should never make contact with any students via Facebook or other social networking sites. Any attempt to contact staff by students should be reported to the Academy Principal.
- No member of staff should interact with, or have a student or former student, as a 'friend' on Facebook or other social networks unless they are at least 18 years old **and** have left the Academy for a year or more (note for time purposes, a student is classed as having 'left' the Academy on the 31st August of their finishing year).
- Employees should **not** identify themselves as representatives of the academy, for example completing the employer section on Facebook confirming their employment at Aspire Academy.
- References to the academy including staff, student, events and other academy information, should not be made on social networking sites unless you have expressed permission to do so from the Academy Principal.
- Where family and friends have students in the academy and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Academy Principal in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on academy equipment.
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
- Staff must be fully compliant with the Social Networking policy which is appendix of the E-Safety Policy.
- Violation of this section will be considered as gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.
- For further guidance and information, please refer to the Online Safety Policy.

Relationships and attitudes towards other members of staff

- All staff are expected to behave in a professional manner towards other members of staff, irrespective of the relative position or status within the academy. All staff should speak politely; communicate honestly and openly with the person concerned, refraining from dealing with sensitive matters in public.
- All staff should be publically supportive of each other, dealing with criticisms or concerns privately, professionally and directly.
- All staff should never act in a way that undermines a colleague or causes distress, by speaking negatively and derogatorily regarding a fellow colleague, to other members of staff. This is deemed to be unprofessional conduct and may be treated as such under the academy disciplinary policy.
- **All staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate and professional boundaries in their dealings with other colleagues at all times.**
- Where one colleague has grave concerns for the well-being of another, they should communicate this to the appropriate line manager. Staff should then be aware that in line with confidentiality, actions following this cannot be discussed. With this in mind, concerns about staff should not be shared with other staff or students under any circumstances.

- Whilst it is important to support colleagues as much as possible, this cannot impact on the day to running, including the support, supervision and teaching of students. Staff must maintain privacy from students wherever possible.
- Given the nature of the students at Aspire, staff should strive to be consistent with their emotional manner and demeanor as part of their daily role wherever possible.
- **Staff should treat other colleagues with professional respect at all times.**

Email etiquette

- It is almost always better to approach a colleague about a concern in person, than to criticise via email; the vast majority of concerns are a result of misunderstandings which can quickly be cleared up in a face-to-face meeting.
- Where it is necessary to send an email that is overtly, or implicitly, critical, it should only be addressed to the person in question; copying others into such communications is damaging to morale, is deemed to be unprofessional conduct and may be treated as such under the academy disciplinary policy.
- It is important to remember that, just like you, everyone is trying to do their best for the students in the academy; before sending critical emails, colleagues should ask themselves whether or not they would be happy to receive such an email themselves.

Letter of etiquette

When communicating by letter; it is essential that professionalism is presented in all written communication when representing the academy. Please ensure the following is adhered to when writing letters at all times,

- Formal letter headed paper is used for all letters;
- Letters are constructed in a formal manner- please seek guidance from Team Leaders within administration if necessary;
- Correct parental salutation is used by checking the appropriate academy systems;
- The letter is free of any grammatical or spelling mistakes and well presented;
- The right tone of language is used;
- Be concise and relevant to the subject matter;
- The letter is polite, even if addressing an irate or serious matter;
- Staff have sought the appropriate authorisation and signature to send the letter regarding the subject at hand;
- Copies of all letters sent are saved for reference and evidence;
- Whole academy letters must be approved by the Academy Principal.

Staff dress code

Staff should adhere to the academy dress code and dress professionally, in order to set a good example to all our students.

We expect all students to wear their uniform and present themselves to a high standard at all times, and the same is expected of staff. Staff need to be mindful that although there is a difference in circumstances students will always compare what staff are wearing with what they are or are not allowed to wear. Staff need to be aware that they are regarded as role models and consistent standards of professional attire help set a purposeful and business-like tone.

The Academy Staff dress code is detailed in full in the Staff Handbook and includes the following principles:

- Clothing needs to reflect the professional environment in which we work and to maintain high standards of smartness and modesty;
- Clothing on extra-curricular activities must be appropriate to a professional environment;
- Skirts should not be immodestly short at any time (i.e. no shorter than just above the knee);
- Staff should not wear see-through clothing or expose underwear and should discreetly limit the amount of bare

flesh visible;

- Leggings and black jeans are also not permitted.
- Male staff should wear collared shirts, the same standard we expect for our students. Polo shirts are not considered to be professional dress;
- There should be no evidence of casual summer, leisure or sportswear*;
- Aspire hoodies should not be worn in the building but are suitable for extra-curricular activities;
- Denim, trainers*, sandals, flip-flops, leggings or shorts should not be in evidence;
- Body and facial piercings (other than a maximum of two earrings in each ear) and tattoos should not be visible.
- Tattoos should be covered to their greatest extent. Where tattoos are unable to be covered, this should be agreed with the principal.

Please note that the wearing of tight clothing, including “skinny trousers”, is not considered to be professional wear.

* With the exception of the PE department who are expected to change into business attire where and when appropriate

Staff are expected to conform to this convention while at the Academy and on Academy business. Dress can be relaxed for training days and school trips, where applicable, but must remain appropriate.

Staff who are considered to be in breach of the dress code will be advised by their line manager and given the opportunity to conform. Disagreements about the appropriateness of specific items of clothing, footwear or appearance will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal will be the final arbiter on such matters.

Conduct outside of work

- Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the academy or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the academy community. Any such conduct could lead to dismissal.
- In particular, incidents involving violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.
- Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff must not use social media e.g. Facebook with students – for more details of this, please refer to the academy e-safety policy. There are occasions when contact with former students can be appropriate – for example to carry out voluntary or mentoring work with students. Before any such contact is made, colleagues must inform both the Principal and the DSL of the proposed contact, to ensure that all appropriate safeguarding issues are addressed properly.
- **Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the academy, the academy community or employer into disrepute.**
- Staff must only use their academy email account when communicating electronically with students, parents and colleagues.
- Staff may undertake paid work outside the academy, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the academy and is not to a level that may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual’s work performance.
- All members of staff must declare any business interests outside of the academy that may be connected either to the supply of goods/services to the academy or be rewarded through association with the academy.

Confidentiality

- Where a staff member has authorised access to confidential information regarding students, their

parents/carers or access to staff members information. Staff must not reveal in any circumstances such information except to those colleagues who have professional roles in relation to the student. To comply with GDPR- for further information or guidance please refer to the GDPR Policy.

- **Members of staff should be conscious of any potential conflict in social or personal relationships with parents . Strict confidentiality must be observed at all times.**
- Staff may, at some point, witness actions which need to remain confidential, such as a behaviour issue concerning a child or member of staff. This needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate academy procedure. **It must not be discussed outside the academy**, including with the pupil's parent or carer, **nor with colleagues in the academy except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.**
- Staff have an obligation to share with their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, any information which gives rise to concern regarding the safety or welfare of a student. Staff must never promise or declare to students they will not act on information that they are told by the student.

Concerns about staff

All staff are responsible for protecting children from maltreatment. Where you are concerned about the actions of a staff member that may cause, or has caused, harm to a student, it is your responsibility to report this immediately to the Principal. Such concerns will be treated with the highest level of sensitivity and seriousness, including referrals to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

Low Level Concerns

Staff are also reminded of the need to report concerns which are of a low level nature - where harm may not have been caused to a child, but where you are concerned that the behaviour of a member of staff goes against our code of conduct. These concerns may be small, for example a sense of 'unease' or nagging doubt. Such examples might include, but are not limited to:

- **Being overly friendly with children** – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with a child or children, e.g. conversations that are about your personal life or are of a sexual nature.
- **Having favourites and treating those favourites differently** – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- **Taking photographs of children on your personal mobile phone or devices.**
- **Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.**
- **Humiliating pupils** - this could be due to the targeting of a child to protect another child or to exert dominance

In all cases, such concerns should be raised with the Principal or DSL as the earliest opportunity. This includes where concerns are about temporary or supply staff.

Disciplinary Action

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.