



STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

[applies to all Trust employees]

1. Introduction

Birmingham City University Academies Trust (BCUAT) values and respects all members of the community. Colleagues are expected to work in co-operation and collaboration within an ethos of mutual trust and confidence. All employees and volunteers must be committed to promoting the safety, welfare and interests of children as paramount. Staff are expected to place the wellbeing, development and progress of children/young people at the heart of their professional practice.

All adults who work with vulnerable people have a crucial role to play in shaping their lives. They have a unique opportunity to interact with them in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help adults working in all settings to establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard vulnerable people and reduce the risk of adults being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. (*see BCUAT Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children & Young People in Education Settings*)

All staff must:

- Have a clear understanding about the nature and content of this document
- Discuss any uncertainties or confusion with their line manager
- Understand what behaviours may call into question their suitability to continue to work with vulnerable people

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Academy employees. This includes implementing its policies and performing your duties with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

The purpose of the Code is to assist you in carrying out your role by making clear the standards of behaviour the Academy requires you to meet. It incorporates the existing laws, regulations and conditions of service.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all employees of Birmingham City University Academies Trust (BCUAT), including employees working in academies operating as part of the Trust and all Head Office employees. The Code also applies to contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work placements.

Owner of Policy	Human Resources
Legislation Status (Statutory / Non-Statutory)	Statutory
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You should read the Code in conjunction with other BCUAT policies, requirements and guidance regarding standards of conduct in particular areas of work. A list of examples is included at Appendix A. This list is not exhaustive and you should familiarise yourself with any relevant guidance which may be provided in relation to your particular area of work. For Teachers this includes the Teachers' Standards: a section relating to conduct rather than teaching practice is included at Appendix B. Any queries relating to any of these policies and guidance should be addressed to the Academy Principal or the HR Consultant.

You should be aware that behaviour in your personal life, or that of family members, may have an impact on your work.

3. Accountability

As an employee, you must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law.

If you fail to comply with the Code's provision, this may result in action under the Academy's Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing

You should inform the Principal if you identify any deficiency in the service provided by the Academy, resulting from breaches of this Code. If you have concerns about raising the deficiency, and wish to maintain confidentiality, you can use the Academy's Whistleblowing Policy.

Under this Code you should make disclosures about possible malpractice to:

- a) Your line manager
- b) Where a) is inappropriate, the Principal, or another member of the Leadership team (BCUAT Accounting Officer for Head Office staff)
- c) Where a) and b) are inappropriate, you should approach the Chair of the Local Advisory Board (LAB) or a member of the BCUAT Board
- d) Where the disclosure relates to potential harm/abuse of a child, you should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – contact details can be found on Safeguarding Boards in the staffrooms of academies and the Birmingham LSCB website
- e) If the concern is regarding financial irregularities or fraud you should report it to the Principal or Chair of the LAB, or where this is not appropriate you should contact the BCUAT Accounting Officer

In order to maintain high standard of working practice with and/or around children, you are expected to comply with 'safe working practice' guidance.

Your appearance, dress and behaviour are expected to promote appropriate boundaries and working relationships between adults and children within the Trust and its academies.

All staff must regard themselves as role models and responsible adults in a position of trust. Staff should therefore not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with or around children.

Staff must be mindful of health and safety issues relevant to their role e.g. wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for PE.

5. Use of IT and Social Networking

Expectations in relation to staff use of electronic communication, including the internet, are detailed in each academy's Acceptable Use of ICT Policy. You have a responsibility to familiarise yourself with the policy and adhere to the requirements entailed.

In summary:

- Contact between staff and current pupils in any social networking site or forum is not permitted. This does not apply when staff members wish to use social networking sites to communicate with their own children or children known personally to them from outside of school who are also pupils of any academies operating as part of the Trust
- Members of staff should not accept any requests from pupils to be 'Friends' on a personal account, or to make contact via social networking sites, nor should they request to be the 'Friend' of, or make contact with any current pupil (other than their own children or children known from outside School). Caution should be exercised when communicating with former pupils who are still under the age of 18.
- You should not communicate through social networking sites with parents who are only known to you through their child attending one of the Trust academies as a pupil. This does not apply to staff members who have children at one of the academies and who personally know other parents with whom they wish to communicate on social networking sites
- If staff use social networking sites during work time, they should only be accessed on a personal device, at appropriate scheduled break times only and not in the presence of school pupils
- When using social networking sites, staff should remember that they remain ambassadors of the Trust at all times and have a responsibility to protect the reputation of the Trust and its academies. Staff should present themselves in a way that is appropriate to their position within the Trust in order to protect their professional reputation and integrity.
- Staff must not post to any social networking site any confidential or business sensitive information, including information that may compromise the security of the Trust or any of its academies. Staff must not post any specific information (including photographs or video footage) of any Trust employee whilst engaged in Trust activities.

6. Disclosure of information

The Trust is committed to open government and to rights of public scrutiny and participation. Legislation, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, requires that certain types of information must be made available to the public and other recognised third parties and to employees.

You have a responsibility to safeguard the security and confidentiality of personal information you hold and you should ensure that only the appropriate amount of information required is provided to those who have a clearly established and legitimate need to use it.

You should not use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

You should seek advice from a senior member of staff or the HR Consultant if you are in any doubt about sharing information. Please also refer to the BCUAT Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy and Confidentiality of Staff Information Policy.

7. Duty of Care

You should always remember your responsibilities to the community you serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service to all groups and individuals within that community. These responsibilities apply equally to your conduct with fellow employees, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and those on student/work experience placements.

You are expected to actively promote the work of the whole Trust.

You should take positive steps to understand the roles of other colleagues. You are expected to cooperate with other professional colleagues who have a role which contributes to enabling children/young people to thrive and succeed.

You should follow the Academy's ethos and approach in any communication with parents or carers

Where you have any concerns about a judgement you have made or an action you have taken, or you feel that an action may be misinterpreted, you have a responsibility to discuss these with your line manager, the Principal or another senior manager. All discussions, including reasons why actions were taken, should be recorded. Any disagreements should be referred to the Chair of the Local Advisory Board or the Chair of the BCUAT Board.

8. Contractors

If you engage in the provision of work under contract, or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors or have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you should formally declare that relationship using the pecuniary interests form which will be renewed annually. Any new relationships should be declared immediately and the pecuniary interest form updated.

Orders and contracts must always be awarded on merit, in accordance with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

As a private citizen, you should be aware of possible conflicts of interest when you buy goods or use the services of firms who have dealings with the Trust and its academies, and you should follow official procedures relating to the disclosure of any such transactions.

9. Equalities

The Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, preventing unlawful discrimination in all of its activities and to valuing diversity.

You must comply with the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy and the appropriate set of Equality Objectives – there is one set of objectives for Head Office staff and each Academy has its own set of objectives. All objectives support the public sector Equality Duty and its purpose to promote equality for all and for everyone to be treated with dignity and respect.

Equality Duty requires all public bodies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people from different equality groups

10. Appointment and other employment matters

If you are involved in the appointment of employees, you should be aware that it is unlawful for you to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, you should not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant or have/have had a close association with the applicant.

You should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions adjustments for another employee who is a relative or with whom you have/have had a close association.

Where you have been provided with a “benefit in kind” or other untaxed income, whether this has been funded from the Academy’s delegated budget, private school fund or parental contributions, this must be formally recorded within the Academy. Where you are uncertain whether you need to declare a “benefit in kind” or untaxed income, you should discuss this with your Principal who will consult with BCUAT if required.

11. Taking other employment

You should not undertake additional employment (Paid or unpaid), or allow your name to be considered for such work, if your proposed additional work either will or has the potential to:

- Create a conflict of interest
- Overlap with official duties
- Make use of material to which you have access by virtue of your position
- Weaken public confidence in the Trust or any of its academies

You should in any case inform the Principal or your line manager of any proposed secondary employment. You should also check your contract of employment

12. Personal interests

Personal interests must not conflict with your public duty. An official position or information acquired in the course of your employment must not be used to further personal interests or for the interests of others.

You must declare, in writing to the Principal/Chair of the LAB (or the BCUAT Accounting Officer for Head Office staff):

- External financial or non-financial interest in any existing or proposed contract with the Trust or any other organisational decision
- Membership of any organisation which could conflict with the Trust’s interests

13. Stewardship

Public funds:

You must ensure that you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner and must not utilise property or other facilities of the Trust for personal use. You should strive to ensure value for money and to avoid legal challenge to the Trust.

Internet/emails:

Any personal use of internet and email must be in accordance with the Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Guidance.

Personal telephone calls:

- Personal mobile phones should be used for any outgoing personal telephone calls, other than in exceptional circumstances (e.g. no signal available). In these circumstances a telephone in the office or Academy may be used, following the local procedure for such use, recording and payment.
- Such outgoing calls/texts and personal incoming calls should occur infrequently and be kept as short as possible. For those working with children, calls/texts should not be made/taken during lessons.

Intellectual Property and Copyright:

- Intellectual Property is property which enjoys legal protection and is a result of intellectual effort, including patents, copyright, trademarks, designs and software. Where developed in the course of your duties, such intellectual property is the property of the Trust. You should not make use of the Trust's intellectual property to conduct private work.
- Any copies of material taken for use within the Trust must only be as allowed under the Copyright Act and under the appropriate licensing agreement.

BCUAT property:

- BCUAT makes the best possible efforts to provide from public funds material, equipment and a working environment which enables people to work efficiently and comfortably. You are urged to use the materials, equipment and working environment in a sensible and thoughtful way. Damage to property owned by the Trust should be reported immediately; this will prevent other people subsequently finding they are unable to use the equipment etc. when the time comes for them to do so.
- Wilful damage to, or abuse of, Trust property will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure

14. Corruption

You must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for you to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or neglecting to do something or showing favour or disfavour to any person in your official capacity.

15. Hospitality and Gifts

You should ensure that accepting hospitality does not create a conflict of interest and is not likely to cause embarrassment to the Trust.

If gifts are offered or you suspect that an improper motive exists, you should always decline the offer and report it to your Principal/Chair of the LAB (or the BCUAT Accounting Officer for Head Office staff). This includes any preferential rates offered for goods and services.

Please also refer to the Trust's Financial Regulations and the BCUAT Anti-Bribery Policy.

16. Sponsorship

Where an outside organisation is seeking to sponsor an activity whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the Code's provisions concerning acceptance of hospitality or gifts and working with contractors apply.

Where the Trust wishes to sponsor an event or service, you must declare in writing to the Principal/Chair of the LAB/BCUAT Accounting Officer any possible conflict of interest or any benefit which you or a member of your family, or anybody with whom you have a close association, is likely to receive. Similarly, where the Academy is providing sponsorship in the community, you must ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

17. Contacts with the media

Any enquiries from the media on work-related matters should be referred to the Principal who will contact the Chair of the LAB. Head Office staff should refer to their line manager. No comments or statements must be made.

If you wish to publish books, articles or letters you have written in connection with your duties, you must first consult the Principal, who will consult with the BCUAT Board. Head Office staff should refer to their line manager.

Appendix A: Additional sources of information

A number of additional sources of information and guidance are listed here. This list is not exhaustive and you should ensure that you familiarise yourself with all Trust policies and procedures, professional best practice and any relevant guidance which may be provided in respect of your particular area of work.

Legislation and Statutory Guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010

Policies and Guidelines:

- BCUAT Data Protection Policy
- BCUAT Freedom of Information Policy
- BCUAT Equal Opportunities Policy
- BCUAT Confidentiality of Staff Information Policy
- BCUAT Anti-Bribery Policy
- BCUAT Disciplinary Policy
- Equality Objectives – individual set of objectives for each academy and Head Office
- Whistleblowing Policy – individual policies for each academy as well as BCUAT policy
- Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Guidance – individual policies for each academy and Head Office
- Safeguarding Policy – individual policies for each academy as well as BCUAT policy
- BCUAT Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults
- BCUAT Financial Regulations

Other sources of information:

- Contract of employment
- Policies and procedures on individual academy websites and BCUAT website
- Any local procedures and guidance specific to your role

Appendix B: Teachers' Standards

The Teachers' Standards document not only sets out in Part One the required Standards for Teaching practice, but also comprises a Preamble which summarises the values and behaviour that all teachers must demonstrate throughout their careers, and Part Two which outlines the Standards for Personal and Professional Conduct. The Preamble and Part Two are shown below:

Preamble

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standards for conduct throughout a teacher's career:

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
 - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
 - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being in accordance with statutory provisions
 - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
 - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - ensuring personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities