

East Midlands Academy Trust

**Staff members
Code of Conduct
2023/2025**

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
Version: V1 26 th March 2019 V2 19 th July 2020 – HM V3 1 st Sept 2021 – LB/HM V4 16 th Sept 2022 – TT V5 11 th Sept 2023 - TT	Filename: EMAT Staff Members Code of Conduct
Approval: September 2023 <i>This Policy was approved by the Trust Board</i>	Next Review: September 2025 <i>This Policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board every two years, but can be revised as needed.</i>
Owner: East Midlands Academy Trust Board of Trustees Senior Workforce Planning and HR Business Partner	Union Status: Not Applicable

Policy type:	
Statutory	Replaces Academy's current policy
Links with other policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAT Appraisal Policy • EMAT Grievance Policy • EMAT Capability Policy • EMAT Disciplinary Policy • EMAT Pay Progression Policy • EMAT Gift Policy • EMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • EMAT Acceptable Usage Policy • EMAT Online Safety Policy • EMAT Dealing with Allegations of abuse against staff members 	



The Everyone's Invited campaign has rightly served to focus our minds on the need to continue to work together to protect children.

We, at EMAT, believe that schools play a crucial role in teaching pupils/students about sex and relationships, equality and diversity and modern citizenship as well as preparing them for the modern world. This is enacted through each school's culture, its curriculum, and all policies. We aim to give all pupils/students and staff a voice to enable them to act in a protective manner towards themselves and others. This includes developing a robust whistleblowing culture as well as fostering a culture of integrity and mutual respect.

We recognise that we have the responsibility of tackling sexual violence and harassment, instilling values in our stakeholders and encourage all to be driven by their strong moral compass. Like so much of education, our work must complement that undertaken by parents and carers so that young people receive a consistent message, and they can go about their lives free from harassment and abuse.

All of our schools will continue to engage with their stakeholders, listen to their concerns and signpost necessary support and provision within and beyond its schools. We ask that anyone who has experienced such behaviour, or who is suffering because of it, to report it to an appropriate adult either in the school or within the EMAT team so they can be supported, and steps can be taken to address the issue.

A dedicated NSPCC helpline is now available to support anyone who has experienced sexual abuse in educational settings or has concerns about someone or the issues raised. The dedicated **NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk**

Staff members can also seek support from **Employee's Assist on 08000 305 182.**

If you are troubled about possible wrongdoing at work, please don't keep it to yourself. Our [Whistleblowing Policy](#) is there to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable you to raise any concern you may have at an early stage and in the right way. If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with:

- **EMAT Head of Governance & Compliance** – Alexandra Rigler
alexandra.rigler@central.emat.uk
- **EMAT Senior Workforce Planning & HRBP** – Ruhena Mahmood –
Ruhena.mahmood@emat.uk

If you are unsure about raising a concern you can get free and independent advice from **Protect helpline on 020 3117 2520 or by emailing whistle@protect-advice.org.uk**

EMAT Staff Members Code of Conduct 2023 - 2025

1. Objective, Scope and Principles

- 1.1 This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow. By creating this policy, we aim to ensure the school environment is where everyone is safe, happy, and treated with respect.
- 1.2 As a member of the Trust, each adult has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school and the Trust, whether inside or outside working hours. This policy relates both to conduct at work and instances where conduct outside work has a direct relationship to the adult's duties. This includes conduct that is likely to bring the Trust into disrepute or raises concerns about an employee's suitability to continue to work in a position of trust. This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff members and volunteers are expected to observe. Staff members working in schools are role models, are in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students within schools.
- This guidance document should be read in conjunction with the Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings and Keeping Children Safe in Education, please see Appendix 1.
- 1.3 In adopting this policy, East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT) is committed to working towards creating a working environment in which all staff members are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and where unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all employees and volunteers are expected to observe. Employees working in schools are role models, are in a position of influence and must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils/students within schools.
- 1.5 In addition to this policy, all teaching colleagues have a statutory obligation to adhere to the most recent 'Teachers Standards' and in relation to this policy, part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct. All Teaching Assistants and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants will be required to adhere to the most recent standards relating to their roles.
- 1.6 This procedure applies to all Trust employees (teaching and support staff) and volunteers within EMAT.
- 1.7 Staff members know and follow the Trust's vision statement. All work supports the vision, and every staff member must take responsibility for their own part of living that vision.
- 1.8 Casual, fixed term contracts, self-employed workers, agency staff working in the school are also expected to observe the standards of behaviour set out in this document. Throughout this policy these individuals are collectively referred to as "staff members"

1.9 Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust, school, and its pupils/students.

2. Definitions

2.1 Where the term 'Headteacher' is used this is applicable to staff employed as Headteacher, Executive Headteacher, or Head of School.

2.2 Where the term 'staff members' is used this is applicable to all teaching and support staff, employees, volunteers, casual, fixed term contracts, self-employed workers and agency staff.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy compiles with the following policies, our funding agreement, and articles of association.

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#)
- [Teachers' Standards](#)
- [Academy Trust Handbook 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

4. Compliance

4.1 Staff members must familiarise themselves and comply with all school and EMAT policies and procedures.

4.2 Staff members must complete the form accessible by Smart log, My Concern or the form in Appendix 4 to confirm that they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

5. Disciplinary Action

5.1 Staff members should be aware that a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

6. Setting an Example

6.1 This Code of Conduct helps staff members to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should be given to the disciplinary rules as set out in the EMAT Disciplinary policy.

6.2 Staff members must not discriminate, harass, or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment

- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

6.3 Staff members are positive role models for pupils/students and therefore must set good examples of behaviour and demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils/students to do the same. Standards expected of staff members can be found in Appendix 2.

6.4 Staff members must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations or abusive or unprofessional conduct.

6.5 Staff members must avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

6.6 Staff members must maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality and being fully prepared for work.

6.7 Staff members will follow and adhere to health and safety guidelines.

7. Safeguarding pupils/students

7.1 Staff members have a duty to safeguard pupils/students from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, and neglect.

7.2 Staff members have a duty to promote a culture of keeping children safe. They have a duty to report any concerns, including those that are low level, using the reporting system of the school and in line with school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensure that it is taken seriously.

7.3 Staff members must make themselves aware of the name of their school's current DSL. This information will be provided on CPD days, and the information is available on notice boards in the staffroom, around each school, wallpaper on the laptops, computers, and staff handbooks.

7.4 Staff need to understand the expectations around their behaviour towards children outlined in the guidance, Appendix 1, ensuring they report any concerns including those not meeting the threshold of harm. These 'low level' concerns are not insignificant and could include but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in secluded area
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language

7.5 Staff members must take reasonable care of pupils/students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring safety and welfare at all times.

7.6 Staff members must never promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil/student.

7.7 Staff members should raise concerns through the appropriate channels to ensure that leaders are able to take swift and robust action.

7.8 Staff members are provided with access to the following documents:

- EMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- EMAT Whistleblowing Policy
- EMAT School's Behaviour Policy
- DfE statutory guidance document: Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings

Staff must read, understand, and abide by the above documents.

8. Relationship with pupils/students

8.1 Staff members must declare any relationships that they may have with pupils/students outside of school; this may include tutoring, mutual members of social groups etc. or family connections. Staff members must not assume that the Trust/school are aware of any such connections. A declaration form is available at Appendix 3.

8.2 Physical relationships with pupils/students, regardless of their age are strictly forbidden and may lead to a criminal conviction. This may also apply to former pupils/students and advice must be sought before commencing any such relationship.

8.3 If staff members and pupils/students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see in to the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place
- Keep the classroom door open

8.4 Staff members must not behave in a way that may be perceived as sarcastic, nor should they make jokes at the expense of pupils/students, embarrass, or humiliate pupils/students, discriminate against or favour pupils/students.

8.5 Staff members must treat pupils/students with dignity and must not demean or undermine them, their parents or carers or work colleagues.

8.6 Where a staff member is the parent of a child attending a school in which they work, contact between the parent and school regarding the child's progress, behaviour or other educational purposes must be via school-authorized mechanisms in line with all other students in the school.

Where safeguarding concerns are raised concerning children with parents or carers who are staff members in the school, this should be dealt with by the senior leader who is the named DSL and not by a DDSL or other staff member. Any allegations made against staff who have children in the

school, either in relation to their own child or another child, should be dealt with using the 'Dealing with allegations against staff policy'.

9. Professional Relationship with Colleagues

9.1 Staff members must help create a positive working environment and behave in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable behaviour. Examples of acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour can be found in Appendix 2.

9.2 Staff members must strive toward and promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that in the first instance staff members will attempt to resolve matters informally unless they feel unable to do so in which case they should refer the matter to their line manager.

10. Honesty and Integrity

10.1 Staff members maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school and Trust property and facilities.

10.2 Staff members 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, 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 your concerns to the attention of your Headteacher or HR or where the concerns relate to the Headteacher, to the CEO or HR.

10.3 Staff members must not accept gifts or hospitality from suppliers or associates of the school or Trust, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from parents. Personal gifts from staff members to pupils/students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record of gifts received will be kept.

10.4 Staff members must declare to the Trust all financial and non-financial interests that could bring them into conflict with the school's or Trust's interests.

10.5 All personal relationships with contractors or potential contracts should be declared.

10.6 Staff members must not be involved in any recruitment process if they have a personal relationship with the applicant inside or outside of work.

10.7 Staff members must not be involved in any decision relating to the discipline, promotion, pay or conditions of another employee, or prospective employee, who is a relative, friend or partner.
In this paragraph: 'Relative' means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons.
'Partner' means a member of a couple who live together or who have a very close personal relationship.

10.8 Without fear of recrimination, staff members must report any inappropriate or breach of procedures using the process laid out within the Trust's Whistleblowing policy.

11. Conduct outside of work

- 11.1 Staff members must not engage in conduct outside of work which could damage the reputation of the school, EMAT, employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 11.2 Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct will be regarded as unacceptable and dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary policy.
- 11.3 Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make staff members unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform will be dealt with under the Disciplinary policy.

12. Employment outside of school

- 12.1 Staff members may undertake work outside of school, either paid or voluntary, provided that authorisation has been sought from HR and it does not conflict with the interests of the school or the Trust, nor to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school or Trust.

13. Online Safety and internet use

- 13.1 Staff members must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Staff members must adhere to the trust's IT Acceptable Usage policy at all times both inside and outside of work.
- 13.2 Staff members must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, and the Trust community into disrepute. Staff members should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 13.3 Staff members must exercise caution in their use of social media or any other web-based presence.
- 13.4 Staff members must not link themselves with the Trust on any social network site they use without prior consent from the PR and Communications Manager.
- 13.5 Staff members must only contact pupils/students via school/Trust authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with pupils/students unless under the provision of paragraph 8.1.
- 13.6 Staff members must report to the Headteacher any contact by a pupil/student by an inappropriate route.
- 13.7 Photographs/still images or video footage of pupils/students should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school/Trust. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur in accordance with the Trust's Privacy Notice or where parental consent has been given.

14. Confidentiality

- 14.1 Staff members must not reveal confidential information about pupils/students or their parents or carers except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil.
- 14.2 Staff members are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by another staff member), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust procedure. It must not be discussed outside of school, including with the pupil/student parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with senior leadership of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

15. Dress and appearance

- 15.1 EMAT recognises that a person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff members must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and promotes a professional image.
- 15.2 The teaching profession is a formal and professional vocation that encompasses both teaching and support staff. A staff dress code should reflect expected professional standards as it is important that all school staff project a professional image to students, parents and other stakeholders.
- 15.3 Our dress code reflects the high expectations of the Trust in terms of learning and teaching, behaviour and student uniform.
- 15.4 Staff members must not dress in a manner that could be regarded by others as offensive or revealing.
- 15.5 Adults who work with pupils/students should ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake.
- 15.6 Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations. This means that adults should wear clothing which:
- Is appropriate to their role
 - Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
 - Does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding
 - Is absent of any political or other contentious slogans
 - Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.
- 15.7 General principle
- Staff must abide by the dress code and dress appropriately for their particular role.
 - The Headteacher has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

- If a staff member's clothing or appearance is not deemed appropriate, the Headteacher/HR/or other members of SLT will speak to the staff member concerned to discuss any concerns.

15.8 Information for all staff

- Clothing must be professional attire, not casual wear.
- Gender stereotypes are not required/reinforced by this policy.
- Shirts, blouses, knitwear should be smart. Whilst not mandatory, ties can present a professional image.
- Trousers must be tailored and be full or $\frac{3}{4}$ length, but no shorter. Any cropped trousers must be formal and tailored.
- PE staff should wear the designated staff kit. Shorts must maintain professional standards.
- Dresses and skirts must not be too short (just above the knee at the shortest)
- Transgender/non-binary members of staff are supported in wearing professional clothing that matches their gender/non-gendered identity.
- Support staff and non-teaching staff (e.g., technicians, canteen staff, premises manager, site staff) should dress smartly and appropriately for their role taking into account health and safety issues/the physical nature of their role.
- Hair should be neat and tidy. No extreme hairstyles are allowed.
- Visible tattoos are discouraged and must be discreet.
- Jewellery should be discreet with visible piercing restricted to ears (for women only). Single nose studs may be worn for reasons of culture or religious observance only. Rings which could harm children should be removed.
- Footwear must be smart and not compromise health and safety

15.9 The following may be helpful in clarifying what is and what is not appropriate:

- No denim
- No revealing or excessively tight clothing
- No shorts (except PE staff)
- No combat or cargo trousers
- No leggings unless under an appropriate length skirt or dress
- No inappropriate footwear e.g. flip flops and trainers (except PE staff) which may contravene Health & Safety guidelines.
- Women's tops may be sleeveless but should not be 'strappy' (i.e. have narrow shoulder straps) or be strapless
- No large logos
- No clothes that are excessively worn or faded
- No clothes with rips or tears

The school may not be able to support staff who do not follow the Health & Safety advice, in the case of a claim for injuries where inappropriate footwear may have contributed.

15.10 It is recognised that there may be specific occasions where the usual dress code would not be appropriate e.g., outdoor/adventure visits and in these circumstances guidance will be provided.

15.11 The dress code may be relaxed on training days at the discretion of the Headteacher.

15.12 Staff members must ensure that where provided, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn as required.

16. Allegations against staff

16.1 Allegations against staff are included in policies to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the Trust and school's values and expected behaviour as set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.

16.2 All allegations against staff will be dealt with in accordance with the EMAT Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 and EMAT Safeguarding and child protection Policy.

17. Concerns and or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold – Low level concerns

17.1 As outlined in KCSIE (2023), all schools within EMAT will *“promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately.*

17.2 *The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’ - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:*

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work*
- and**
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.*

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children*
- having favourites*
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy*
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or*
- humiliating pupils.*

17.3 *Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.*

17.4 *Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.*

17.5 *It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect*



those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings”.

Appendix 1

- [Home \(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org\)](https://saferrecruitmentconsortium.org)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings](#)

Appendix 2 Acceptable/Unacceptable behaviour and employee standards

Examples of Acceptable Behaviour

People behave acceptably when they:

- afford dignity, trust and respect for everyone and themselves;
- have awareness of the effects of their behaviour on others and only make reasonable and manageable demands;
- communicate honestly and openly, clearly stating what they need and expect of others;
- provide and are receptive to honest feedback based on evidence; and
- challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in an appropriate way.

This list is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, guidance, common sense, or conduct.

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

- using aggressive language, threatening, ridiculing, ignoring people or repeatedly shouting;
- bringing up details of someone's private life inappropriately;
- ridiculing or demeaning someone;
- comments or jokes, about distinctive peoples and nationalities;
- frequent comments about aspects of physical appearance or using forms of address that are demeaning;
- coercing someone to join the harassment/bullying of another person;

This list is not exhaustive. It is simply a guide to help individual consider their own and others behaviour and gain an understanding of what behaviours are unacceptable in the workplace.

This list is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, guidance, common sense, or conduct.

Standards expected of staff members

The standards expected of all staff members include but are not limited to:

- maintaining standards of behaviour in keeping with the interests and standing of the school and EMAT. This includes behaviour outside of working hours and in any form that is visible to the public, including social networking or any other electronic medium;
- devoting full attention while at work to the duties of their position and in doing so acting with responsibility, good judgement and in good faith;
- carrying out reasonable instructions given by those with authority to do so;
- not divulging to any unauthorised person or making personal use of confidential information connected with the Trust either intentionally or through negligent behaviour;
- observing the rules, regulations and instructions adopted by the Trust;
- following appropriate safeguarding procedures;
- participating fully in any investigation into alleged incidents and/or allegations including attending meetings as directed;
- using electronic communication appropriately;
- ensuring that information brought to light as a result of any investigation is treated with discretion;
- carrying out their role consistently with any standards set by their appropriate body;
- taking steps to address any unacceptable behaviour;
- treating colleagues and third parties with dignity and respect.

In addition to the above, the expectations of those employed in management roles are to:

- ensure the standards expected from all staff members are role-modelled, monitored and managed effectively;
- effectively manage all applicable statutory and non-statutory obligations;
- appropriately manage all alleged incidents and/or allegation.

This list is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, guidance, common sense, or conduct.

Appendix 3: Relationships with pupils/students outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby staff members are known to pupils/students outside of work. Examples include membership of sports clubs and family connections.

Staff members must declare any relationship outside of school that they may have with pupils/students.

Staff members name:	Pupil/Student name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the Code of Conduct relating to contact out of school with pupils/students in line with this policy.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school/trust are fully aware of any relationships.

Signed:	
Print name:	
Date:	

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher or HR.

Appendix 4: Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the Trust's Code of Conduct.

Signed:	
Print name:	
Position/Post held:	
Date:	

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Headteacher.