



# SENDAT Code of Conduct for Employees & Volunteers

To be reviewed triennially or when required

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**This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with (but not limited to):**

- SENDAT Safeguarding and Child Protection policy (including the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education')
- SENDAT Data Protection policy (including GDPR)
- Remote live teaching – guidance for staff
- SENDAT Staff Handbook
- Email protocol guidance
- SENDAT Gifts and Hospitality policy



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## 1. Statement of Intent

SENDAT is a Multi Academy Trust specialising in the care and education of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This policy should be considered in the light of this context and the complexity of need that is accommodated within the trust.

## 2. Aims, scope and principles

This Code of Conduct aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff and volunteer colleagues to follow. In all sections below where staff colleagues are mentioned, this also applies to volunteers.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all SENDAT Schools / Alternative Provisions (APs) create and maintain learning and working environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers' Standards](#) and [Teaching Assistants Standards](#) and encompass the principles of professional conduct as found in other role's professional standards.

All staff and volunteers have an influential position in the school, and will act as role models for students by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all teachers and teaching assistants in particular will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers' Standards or Teaching Assistant's Standards.

We expect all other staff and volunteers including those involved in governance of SENDAT to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

All staff and volunteers must avoid putting themselves and others at risk of allegations of abuse or unprofessional conduct. This code helps all staff and volunteers to understand what is and what is not acceptable.

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, seek advice from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and act in the best interests of the school and its students.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)', we have a staff code of conduct (this document) and also an acceptable use of technologies, staff/student



relationships and communications, including the use of social media – see Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) available in the staff handbook folder or ask the office for a copy.

This policy will remain compliant with our funding agreement and articles of association.

#### 4. General obligations

Staff will act as a positive role model for students at all time when in school, working remotely / online and in any other situation where they are working with students on or off-site. They will:

- Follow and adhere to school values and comply with trust and school procedures and policies;
- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality;
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school;
- Treat students and others with dignity and respect;
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others;
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- Ensure they do not express their own personal beliefs in a way that will influence students, exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law;
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within;
- Adhere to the Teachers' and Teaching Assistants' Standards and other appropriate professional standards.

#### 5. Safeguarding

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

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

All concerns about students must be reported to one of the School / AP DSLs. The Trust's Head of Safeguarding is Georgina Lewis.

The SENDAT Safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the staff handbook, which can be accessed on Outlook SharePoint and from the school office at all SENDAT Schools/APs. Newly appointed staff will be given copies as part of their initial induction training.

Any **allegation of inappropriate behaviour** of a safeguarding nature made against a member of staff by a student, parent or other professional will be investigated and a record kept of it.



**References:** Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate.

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be unsubstantiated, malicious etc. should also not be included in any reference.

SENDAT operates a policy of open references, so the member of staff may see a copy of the reference upon request.

## **6. Staff/student relationships**

Staff will observe appropriate professional boundaries with students, both physically and in the way they speak and language used. Staff should always listen to themselves and be mindful of their tone of voice and volume – sometimes a raised voice may come across as shouting. Shouting should only be used in an extreme situation as a means of averting danger.

Staff should remain sensitive to how they are being received and not use sarcasm or any other communication, either written or verbal, which may be perceived as belittling or humiliating to a student.

This applies to all situations, including (but not limited to):

- Classroom teaching in school;
- Residential trips, school visits and other extra-curricular activities both on and off-site;
- Remote / online teaching and/or support;

Staff will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and 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;



Staff should avoid social contact with students outside of school hours if possible unless in a professional capacity sanctioned by the school or SENDAT.

There may be circumstances, of course, where there is contact out of school between staff and students for reasons other than school work, for example:

- A staff colleague's own child(ren) has friends who are students at the school;
- Their own child(ren) are students at the school;
- The staff colleague is involved with a voluntary organisation such as Scouts, Youth Club etc where students are members.

If a staff colleague has any concerns or needs guidance on how to manage these relationships, advice should be sought from a member of the SLT.

Personal contact details should never be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles. *See AUP for more information*

While we are aware many students and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to students are not acceptable. If you are uncertain whether an item falls into the category of 'gift' or 'award' see advice from a member of the SLT.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, this should be reported to their line manager, DSL or the Headteacher / Head of School/AP.

## **7. Communication and social media**

School staff's social media profiles should not be available to students. If staff colleagues have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as students may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and always set public profiles to private.

Staff colleagues should not attempt to contact students or their parents / carers via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of professional or personal relationship. Staff colleagues should not attempt to find students' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are students at the school without their consent.

Staff should not make any comments about their own School/AP or the wider Trust to the media. The CEO, or a specific individual with delegated authority, is the only person authorised to speak to the media on the Trust's behalf. See section 12 below for further information.

Staff should limit the use of their work email to business related matters only.



School 'All-staff' emails should be limited and only used for when **all staff colleagues** need to be aware of the content of that email. Staff colleagues must not use all-staff emails to promote their own personal / political views, any commercial enterprise or to canvass for charity donations.

If any member of staff is uncertain whether a message is appropriate for the all-staff email, advice should be sought from a member of the SLT.

## **8. Data Protection and acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or school equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of students. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of students.

Staff will have due regard to Data Protection and ensure the security of data at all times.

External hard drives such as pen sticks and other removable electronic storage must not be used for trust documents or data. There should be minimum usage of pen sticks, external hard drives and other electronic storage and where they are used, they should be encrypted. Any storage of personal data must be in compliance with GDPR.

SENDAT and its' schools has the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system. *See Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for more details.*

## **9. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about their School/AP, staff, students and their parents.

This information must never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority;
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others;
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended.

**This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child is at risk of harm.**

## **10. Honesty and integrity**

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with students, handling money, claiming expenses and using school property and facilities.



Staff will not accept bribes, or gifts which could be perceived as bribes or other attempts to gain favour. Gifts that are worth more than £20 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register. See *SENDAT Gifts and Hospitality Policy for more information*.

Staff should not give personal gifts to individual students. If a staff colleague wishes to give a personal gift to a group of students, he/she should seek advice from a member of the SLT.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the school about their qualifications, professional experience and other personal information is correct, unambiguous and complete.

## 10. Dress code

Staff will dress in a professional, appropriate manner that is not likely to be viewed as revealing or sexually provocative nor gives rise to misunderstanding or causes distraction. Clothing must be 'safe' and appropriate for the role.


Protective clothing must be worn where necessary and in-line with current guidance

Tattoos should be covered up.

Clothes will not display any slogans which could be perceived as political or offensive.




Staff colleagues should dress in accordance with the guidance given below at all times when the School / AP is in session.

### Further guidance:

	Guidance:	This means:
<b>Footwear</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should be safe and appropriate to each person's role especially for PE, Food studies, DT, etc.</li><li>• Flat – without large heel for safe navigation around the school site</li><li>• No open-toe footwear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate to activity</li><li>• E.g. Trainers for P.E/ covered footwear for DT/FS (H/S)</li><li>• No flip-flops unless specifically needed for task e.g. poolside or in other wet swimming area</li></ul>





	<b>Guidance:</b>	<b>This means:</b>
<b>Clothes</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be fit for the job</li> <li>• PE clothes, swimming kit</li> <li>• Should not be revealing, sexually provocative or offensive</li> <li>• No contentious or political slogans</li> <li>• No denim jeans of any type</li> <li>• Clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midriff covered, shoulders covered</li> <li>• No underwear showing,</li> <li>• No low cut tops,</li> <li>• Discreet one-piece swimwear</li> <li>• Shorts and skirts to be discreet</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guidance:</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This means:</b></li> </ul>
<b>Jewellery</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be safe and discreet</li> <li>• Should allow for easy hand washing</li> <li>• Should not be likely to scratch others or catch in clothing</li> <li>• Body piercings other than simple earrings must not be visible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No long chains</li> <li>• Fewest possible number of rings and/or bracelets</li> <li>• Appropriate stud earrings e.g. no dangly earrings especially for PE, etc.</li> <li>• No nose, lip or tongue piercings</li> </ul>
<b>Hair</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be fit for the job</li> <li>• No extreme hairstyles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tied back if necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Tattoos</b>	Should not be visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered up</li> </ul>

**PLEASE SEE YOUR STAFF HANDBOOK FOR ANY SITE-SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS TO THE DRESS CODE**

## 12. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the School/AP, the wider Trust, or the teaching profession into disrepute. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the school, in public (including social media). This means that members of staff should be careful not to criticise staff colleagues or undermine Trust policies in public. Staff colleagues should be aware that, broadcasting extremist views or views which break rules of confidentiality or are in clear breach of any instruction, could lead to an allegation of breaching the employer's trust and confidence in them.



Any behaviour which the Trust's Directors or Trust Leadership Group (TLG) feel brings the School /AP or the wider Trust into disrepute can be cited as evidence of unprofessional conduct.

Appearing to be under the influence of alcohol in public is likely to be detrimental to one's professional reputation. Any use of illegal drugs would also be likely to lead to a disciplinary investigation.

Members of staff have a right to take part in protest marches, rallies, lobbies, etc. provided that their actions are peaceful and legal. Staff colleagues can also exercise their right to express views in the press, appear on TV and radio phone-ins, etc, but they must not do this in any way in which it could be perceived that they are representing the School/AP or wider Trust.

### **13. Malpractice**

Malpractice is where a member of staff breaks rules outside school which govern standards in public life and seek to ensure fairness and irreproachable decision making. Staff colleagues would be opening themselves up to investigation and possible action if they:

- Use their position to purchase School/AP goods or services from a friend or family/business partners (i.e. any question of personal gain for themselves, their family or other personal contacts)
- Fail to register any interest (direct or indirect) in organisations that might do business with the School/AP (e.g. if the member of staff or a family member are a share-holder in a building firm or publisher)
- Use School/AP purchasing agreements for personal goods and services
- Canvas for the appointment of oneself, a relative or friend, beyond the normal a letter of application or reference.
- Profit from any School/AP activity: all accounts for school visits, performances, etc., should be handled by administrative staff and conducted via school banking accounts. If staff colleagues are claiming expenses for running such activities (phone, postage, travel etc then this should be clearly itemised and approved by the appropriate line manager).