



# Staff Code of Conduct

September 2022

**A BROAD HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST POLICY**

Throughout the Policy, Broad Horizons Education Trust will refer to the Trust and the settings within it. Where there are specific setting contexts these will be included in appendices

## Broad Horizons Education Trust Vision, Mission and Philosophy

### Vision

Our **ambition** is simply to offer the best education and experience so that every child is supported to achieve their full potential.

### Mission

To create a climate of inclusion, equality and trust that unlocks the potential of everyone in our community of schools and in the wider Norfolk education system.

### Our Philosophy

Our philosophy is that “time matters”. School years are precious for every child and young person and we will improve how our family of schools work to make every moment in school count.

### Vision

1. **Inclusive** – we lead with equality, creating and maintaining a sense of belonging for all, ensuring everyone is understood and feels valued. Leaders, colleagues and all in the trust bring a high level of supportive energy and commitment so that we individually and collectively can do our best work.
2. **Collaborative** – we work together with a shared purpose. We create an environment where there is a high degree of trust, a strong element of interest in each others’ talents and capabilities and a strong view that others can be depended on to do what they say they will do.
3. **Having respect** – we promote a deep understanding of the abilities and qualities of others and a feeling of appreciation for each other. We have due regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of others, acknowledging those and showing respect by being polite and kind.
4. **Curious** – we are inquisitive and have a strong desire to learn and actively seek out challenges and new experiences to broaden our knowledge and understanding. We will continually exercise our minds through being curious, being observant of others and anticipating new ideas.
5. **Optimistic** – we are positive, hopeful and confident about the future and expect the most favourable outcome for each and every one of our children and colleagues.

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## Statement of intent

**Broad Horizons Education Trust** expects all pupils to receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

Employees at the school should understand that their own behaviour, and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, sets an example.

We recognise that the majority of staff members act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect; however, we consider it important to clarify the expected standards.

This document forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, and with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document applies to all staff members who are:

- Employed by the school, including the headteacher.
- Employed in units or bases that are attached to the school.
- Employed at head office.

This document does not apply to:

- Peripatetic staff members who are centrally employed outside the Trust
- School catering staff employed by external contractors
- Employees of external contractors.

These employees are governed by their employment contracts and any relevant laws pertaining to their activities within the school, for example, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, the Trust will take action, within the terms of any contract, to address conduct or behaviour of any of the above third parties that falls short of our expectations. Which may include requesting the removal of the member of staff.

**The term headteacher applies to the Headteacher and anyone who is deputising for them.**

Signed by:

CEO:

Date:

Chair of Trustees:

Date:

## **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

**The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**  
**The Data Protection Act 2018**  
**The Education Act 2002**  
**The Children Act 1989**  
**The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended)**  
**Sexual Offences Act 2003**

This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

**DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'**  
**DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'**  
**DfE (2018) 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'**

## **2. Related School Policies**

This Staff Code of Conduct has due regard to the following school policies and procedures where they apply:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- BST Reporting Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy 2022
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Single Equalities Policy
- Intimate and Personal Care Policy
- Staff Leave of Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Photography Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy

### 3. Safeguarding pupils

- In accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022, all staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect their welfare.
- All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.
- To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct and the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.
- In accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, and will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures.
- Any staff member that has concerns about a staff member's actions or intent that may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm will report this in line with the Whistleblowing Policy to the headteacher immediately so appropriate action can be taken.
- If the concern is regarding the headteacher, staff will report this to the Trust CEO, or Trust DSL.
- All staff will partake in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training; additionally, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates but at least annually.
- Staff will be aware that confidentiality will never be promised to a pupil – staff will understand the procedure to follow if a pupil discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### 4. Appearance and Dress

The Trust expects that staff members will:

- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school / Trust.
- **[Updated]** Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role – the Trust will make reasonable adjustments to uniform expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs.
- Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.

- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders.
- Cover any tattoos or body art whilst in work; small earrings are acceptable, but all other body piercings must be removed.

## **5. Attendance**

The Trust expects that staff members will:

- Attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or during holidays where possible.
- Refer to the Trust's Staff Leave and Time Off Policy if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

## **6. Professional behaviour and conduct**

- Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- Email correspondence:
  - Think about the time you are sending the email - do you really need to send it outside of working hours (between 6pm and 8am or at weekends) or last thing on a Friday?
  - Think about the tone you are using - would you want to receive an email like that?
- Avoid workplace gossip and negativity as it breeds stress and resentment. (We all have a duty to take active steps to divert conversations away from this if we come across it.)
- The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.
- Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school or Trust into disrepute.
- Staff members will inform the headteacher / CEO if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

- Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits too. All staff attending a trip or visits will act in accordance with this policy.
- Maintain confidentiality about anything that we see or hear in the school so that parents and children can trust us, and as a way of showing respect to our fellow professionals.
- Work as part of a team, contributing as well as learning from others and helping to build up a strong workforce
- Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school/Trust resources at all times and will not use school/Trust resources for party political purposes.

## **7. Conduct outside of work**

- Staff may undertake work outside school/Trust, either paid or voluntary, on the understanding that school/Trust work comes first and provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school/Trust. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school/Trust into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.
- Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school/Trust or the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school/Trust community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.
- Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.
- Staff will be expected to maintain professional conduct at all times whilst attending work related social events.

## **8. Smoking, alcohol and other substances (smoking includes the use of electronic cigarettes).**

- Staff will not smoke on any Trust premises.
- Staff will not smoke whilst working with or supervising pupils off-site, such as when on educational visits and trips.

- The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and any staff member who is believed to be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol will be required to leave the premises immediately.
- If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the Trust has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

## **9. Health and safety (everyone's responsibility)**

Staff members will:

- Be familiar with and adhere to the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they take every action to keep themselves and everyone in the school environment safe and well.
- Comply with health and safety regulations and use any safety equipment and protective clothing which is supplied to them.
- Comply with hygiene requirements.
- Comply with accident reporting requirements. Inform the headteacher/ HR of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

## **10. Declaration of interests**

- Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with would be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school/Trust.
- For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.
- The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:
  - Payments for services
  - Equity interests
  - Intellectual property rights
  - Hospitality or gifts

- Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school/Trust.
- Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an individual's obligations or commitments to the school/Trust. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the individual has a close relationship.
- Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:
  - Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
  - Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
  - Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague
- Membership to a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.
- Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.
- Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a very serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.

## **11. Relationships with pupils**

The school/Trust expects that staff will:

- Maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils at all times, and will consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and necessary.
- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to others questioning their actions.
- Ensure that they do not establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship, or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- Ensure that they do not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils: this includes sexual remarks and discussing their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils.

- Only contact pupils via the school's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.
- Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect to that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

## **12. Physical contact with pupils**

- The Trust understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.
- When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact.
- Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account.
- Staff will never touch a pupil in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions.
- Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.
- Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.
- Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.
- Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher and appropriate procedures will be followed.
- Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate the use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.
- If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder.

Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

- Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the Trust's Physical Intervention Policy.

### 13. Showering and changing

## **[Updated]** Showering and changing

- Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing, e.g. before and after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.
- The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- **[New]** Where possible, female staff will supervise girls and male staff will supervise boys.
- **[Updated]** Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy and will only remain in the changing room for as long as is necessary.
- Staff will never change or shower in the same area as pupils.

### 14. Transporting pupils

- When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.
- Staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

- Two or more staff will be present in the vehicle to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

## **15. Financial inducements**

Staff members will:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the Trust's financial regulations.
- Declare to the COO, in writing, any gifts received, with the exception of:
  - Low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo e.g. mugs/coasters/pens – these items may be accepted.
  - Gifts offered by parents or pupils to school staff to express their gratitude, but staff members should always refuse monetary gifts.
  - Hospitality in the form of meals and drinks where it is part of a normal business meeting.
  - Authorised visits to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals and social functions in connection with the school's business, which shall be at the school's expense.
- Not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentives from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned.
- Declare any gift that cannot be returned to the COO, who will decide how it will be used.
- Only accept offers to specific events after authorisation from the CEO, or COO.

## **16. E-safety**

- Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in Trust policies at all times.
- Staff are required to employ the highest security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media.
- The Trust understands that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this would lead to a conflict of interest.

- Notwithstanding the above, if a staff member, who is also a parent, makes contact with other parents, they should be clear that the views and opinions they are expressing are their own and not those of the school/Trust.
- Staff will remain mindful of their use of social media and their web-based presence including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or indirectly which may bring themselves, the Trust, the school or the school community into disrepute.

## **17. Premises, equipment and communication**

- School/Trust equipment and systems are available only for school or Trust related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the headteacher or line manager.
- Illegal, inappropriate or unacceptable use of school or Trust equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, could lead to an employee's dismissal.
- Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something he/she proposes to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from the headteacher or Trust IT team.
- The Trust reserves the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.
- Communication systems may be accessed when the Trust suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the IT manager, only with the permission of the CEO, or the Trust Board where the CEO is the subject of concern. .
- Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the IT manager. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Trust equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g. laptops, will be returned to the Trust when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the headteacher or IT department.

## **18. Photography and videos**

- Photographs and videos of individuals or groups will only be taken using Trust equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited, in accordance with the Trust Policy.
- Consent for taking photographs will be obtained from parents, or the pupil themselves, if they are deemed old enough and able to make the decision for themselves.
- The age of consent that is legislated is 13 and above; however, this is only applicable for online services provided directly to children. For everything else, an appropriate age for consent is considered on a case-by-case basis by the DPO, headteacher and a pupil's parents (where appropriate).
- Pupils who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or be filmed will have their wishes respected, in line with Policy.
- The headteacher will be notified of the proposed use of the imagery or video and the equipment and ensure that the use of such is included in lesson plans where this is necessary.
- All photographs and videos will be available for scrutiny, and staff will be prepared to justify the images or footage taken.
- Careful consideration will always be given to the activities which are being filmed or photographed, to ensure that images or videos are not indecent and cannot be misused.
- Photographs and video imagery will be retained/disposed of in line with our Data Protection policy.

## **19. Data protection and confidentiality**

- Regarding personal and sensitive data, staff members are required, under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:
  - Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
  - Ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
  - Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.

- Staff members will not disclose sensitive information about the school, its employees or the Trust to other parties.
- The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.
- Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made as subject access request to their line manager in writing in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

## **20. Probity of records**

The deliberate falsification of documents, such as references, academic qualifications, legal documents, expenses and timesheets is unacceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

## **21. Contacts**

Staff members will not use school or Trust business contacts for acquiring materials or services at trade/discount prices for non-school activities, unless participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups.

## **22. Monitoring and review**

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust and any changes made will be communicated to all members of staff.
- All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.