Code of

FROM october 2026

AQUINAS

Policy control			
Title	Code of Conduct		
Responsibility	Human Resources Director		
Review body	People, Performance and Development Committee		
Suite	Human Resources		
Approved	April 2023		
Updated	October 2026		
Review date	October 2028		
Version	V1.2		
Version	**Date**	**Author**	**Note of revisions**
V1.0	01/04/23	MRO	General updates
V1.0	01/04/25	BBL	Life extended
V1.1	17/09/25	BBL	Updated to include political impartiality
V1.2	20/10/26	JCl	General updates and inclusion of Sexual Harassment

Code of Conduct

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Statement of Intent

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust (the Trust) expects all pupils registered at its academies to receive high-quality teaching and learning in a positive and respectful environment. Employees of the Trust (staff) are therefore expected to ensure that their own behaviour, and the way they conduct themselves with colleagues, pupils, parents, and other stakeholders, sets a positive and professional example for all.

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

This policy forms part of the contract of employment of staff and failure to comply with it, along with the associated Trust and academy policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

This document also applies to volunteers who are also required to confirm compliance with this code of conduct as a condition of volunteering with the Trust. Hereinafter, reference to staff will include volunteers.

This document does not apply to those who are governed by their employment contracts such as:

- Peripatetic staff members not directly employed by the Trust.
- Contracted staff such as school catering and cleaning staff.
- Employees of external contractors.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the Aquinas Staff Handbook, the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document, the NJC National Agreement on Terms and Conditions of Service and individual contracts of employment.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document as part of their induction programme.

1. [Updated] Safeguarding pupils

In accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' (KCSIE), staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect and promote their welfare.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure, and respected. To effectively safeguard pupils, staff are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Staff Code of Conduct, their academy's Behaviour Management and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies, 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 each academy's Behaviour Management, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Serious violence.
- FGM.
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE).
- Bullying: this includes cyberbullying, and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Domestic Abuse.

[Updated]Copies of policies and a copy of 'Part one' of KCSIE will be provided to all staff at induction. School leaders and staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A of

KCSIE. Staff will have a clear understanding of the Trust and academy policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g., abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against pupils.

In accordance with their academy's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Pupils requiring mental health support.
- LAC and previously LAC.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Pupils struggling with mental health needs.
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.
- **[Updated]** Children absent from education, particularly if on repeat occasions and/or long periods of time.
- Elective Home Education (EHE).

If a staff identify a pupil who is subject to, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, they will follow the necessary reporting and referral procedures outlined in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**. Staff will be aware of the procedures to follow if a pupil tells them they are experiencing abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

In all cases, if staff feel unsure as to whether an incident or pupil would be classed as a safeguarding concern, they will speak directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff will not assume a colleague will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

Staff will understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in the academy, this does not mean it is not happening. Staff will report any concerns regarding any form of abuse to the DSL without undue delay. Staff will understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature.

[Updated]Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's actions or intent or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the **Allegations of Abuse Policy** or **Whistleblowing Policy** immediately so appropriate action can be taken. This includes concerns relating to the volunteers, supply staff, contractors, or individuals or organisations using the school premises to provide activities for children.

'Up skirting' is not tolerated by the Trust, and any incidents of 'up skirting' must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.

[Updated]If staff feel unable to raise an issue with the school, they will use other whistleblowing channels, including contacting the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. Staff can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing. Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

Staff will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This will include training around online safety, particularly concerning the understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, in line with the filtering and monitoring standards. This training will be updated at least annually to continue to provide staff members with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Staff will recognise that, when teaching pupils about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every pupil, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for pupils who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

If the concern is regarding the Headteacher (reference to Headteacher includes Executive Headteacher and Head of School), staff will report this to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust. Any concerns regarding the CEO must be reported to the Chair of the Trust Board.

Staff will recognise that, when teaching pupils about safeguarding and online safety, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for every pupil, and a more personalised or contextualised approach may be needed for pupils who are vulnerable, victims of abuse and/or have SEND.

[Updated] Staff will be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments, including the local criteria and levels of need for accessing Family Help support and statutory services, and will understand their role in this process.

Staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe by the school. They will never give the impression that pupils are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a pupil ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Staff will know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving those who need to be involved, but will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

Staff will be aware of the school's legal duty to refer anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult to the DBS – this includes where:

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.

- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

2. Appearance and dress for employees

The Trust expects that employees will:

- Adhere to the Trust dress code.
- Ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the school.
- Dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role.
- Remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- Not wear clothing that could have implications for the health and safety of themselves, or others in their care.
- Not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues, or other stakeholders.
- Ensure that, if visible, tattoos do not cause offence to others; if tattoos are likely to cause offence, they must be covered up whilst in work.
- Ensure that jewellery and piercings are minimal and, in the health and safety interests of both staff and children, avoid anything that could catch or be caught by pupils.

The Dress Code can be found at **Appendix**.

3. Attendance

The Trust expects that employees 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 school's **Discretionary Leave Policy** if they need time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work due to illness or injury.

4. Professional behaviour and conduct

Staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct such that public confidence in their integrity is sustained.

Staff are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect. 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. They will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is

expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits. Staff attending a trip or visit will act in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

Staff will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications, or experience, or bring the Trust or academy into disrepute. They will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of resources at all times and will not use school resources for party political purposes.

Staff will inform their Headteacher or CEO if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Political Impartiality

Teaching about political issues and the different views held on these is an essential part of a broad and balanced curriculum, and an important way in which schools help pupils to become active citizens who are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Legal duties on political impartiality do not limit the range of political issues and viewpoints schools can and do teach about. Instead, they should help ensure teachers and staff do this in an appropriate manner, building pupils' ability to form their own views and opinions.

Staff should always take a reasonable and proportionate approach to political impartiality.

This should not interfere with effective teaching and meeting other responsibilities, including promoting shared principles that underpin our society such as tolerance and respect.

It is also important that concerns from parents, carers and others about political impartiality are always treated seriously and handled with sensitivity.

In simple terms, legal duties on political impartiality mean that schools:

- must not promote partisan political views in teaching.
- should offer a balanced presentation of opposing views when political issues are brought to the attention of pupils.

Staff may need to think carefully about what is and is not a political issue. Some issues are clearly political, such as those relating to ongoing government activity, whilst other political issues may not relate to government at all.

Political impartiality is important beyond the curriculum. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they act appropriately in terms of their behaviour, the views they express and the use of school resources, always.

Staff can discuss political issues with pupils, and their interest and engagement in these should be encouraged. However, staff should not promote partisan political views to them, or encourage them to participate in specific political activity, including protests.

Further guidance can be found in: DFE 'Political Impartiality in Schools'.

5. Other employment

Employees are expected to devote the whole of their time and attention during working hours to their academy. If they are proposing to take up employment with an employer or pursuing separate business interests or any similar venture, they must discuss the proposal with their Line Manager in order to establish the likely impact of these activities on both them and the academy. They will be asked to give full details of the proposal and consideration will be given to:

- Working hours.
- Competition, reputation, and credibility.
- Conflict of interest.
- Health, safety, and welfare.

The academy may refuse consent to any request. If staff work without consent it could result in the termination of employment.

Staff will not engage in outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the Trust and academy, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct are unacceptable, and will result in disciplinary procedures in line with the **Disciplinary Policy**.

Nor should staff engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the academy, school community or employer into disrepute. This is explored further in the Acceptable use of technology section of this policy.

6. Private work

Staff will not be allowed to undertake any work which could otherwise have been undertaken by the Trust or relevant academy. In the event of staff being approached to undertake such work they must report the approach to their Headteacher.

7. Smoking, alcohol, and other substances

Staff are not permitted to smoke/vape anywhere on or immediately outside the front of their academy grounds (including inside vehicles). Smoking is only permitted during authorised breaks away from the academy. This includes e-cigarettes.

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

Staff will report for work and remain in a condition to perform their duties free from the effects of drugs, alcohol or any other substances that may hinder judgement and cause changes in behaviour; this does not include over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol.

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated and employees must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee'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.

8. [Updated]Health and safety

Staff will:

- Be familiar with, and adhere to, the school'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, adhering to any rules, routines and procedures in place, and cooperate with school leaders and colleagues on matters relating to health and safety.
- Use the correct equipment and tools for the job and any protective clothing supplied.
- Inform the headteacher of any paid work which is undertaken elsewhere, for compliance with The Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).
- Adhere to their common law duty to act as a prudent parent would when in charge of pupils.
- [New] Be aware of and adhere to the school's Allergen & Anaphylaxis Policy.

9. Declaration of interests

Employees are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with could be in conflict with the interests of the Trust or academy.

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.

Non-financial conflicts of interest can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with an employee's obligations or commitments to the academy or Trust. These interests may include any benefit or advantage including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of the employee's career or gain for immediate family or someone with whom the employee 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 employee has a close personal relationship.
- Where the employee 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.

Employees 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 serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact their academy or trade union.

All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted annually for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

The school is aware that situations may arise where family interests or loyalties conflict with those of the school; however, staff have an obligation to act in the best interests of the school community to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest.

10. Relationships with pupils

The Trust expects that staff will:

- Always maintain professional boundaries and relationships with pupils, 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 Trust or academy's established mechanisms: personal phone numbers, email addresses or social media platforms will not be used to contact pupils.

Staff are aware that they must not:

- Discuss personal information with pupils, such as concerning their lifestyle or marital status, unless it is directly relevant to the topic being taught.
- Correspond in a personal nature through any medium with pupils, e.g., phone calls or text messages, unless it is within the staff member's role and via an approved communication method, e.g., school emails.
- Adopt an ongoing support role beyond the scope of their position.
- Use personal equipment for approved activities, such as a personal camera, unless approved in writing by the SLT, and will not photograph, audio record or film pupils without authorisation from the SLT and consent from the pupil's parent.
- Save images, videos, or audio recordings of pupils on personal devices, unless authorised by the SLT or parents.
- Upload images, videos, or audio recordings of pupils to any location without consent from parents and the SLT.
- Discuss or share information regarding other pupils or members of staff; staff should be aware of their surroundings when speaking to others, as their conversations may be overheard.
- Ignore instances of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour amongst pupils.
- Invite or allow pupils to visit their home.
- Allow pupils to access staff members' personal devices.
- Attend pupils' homes or their social gatherings, unless approved by the SLT.
- Be alone with a pupil outside of teaching responsibilities, unless approved by the SLT.
- Enter changing rooms or toilets occupied by pupils, when supervision is not required or appropriate, use toilet facilities allocated to pupils, or undress in facilities intended for use by pupils.
- Not transport a pupil unless in line with the **Driving at Work Policy**.
- Carry out one-to-one tutoring, mentoring, or coaching of pupils, unless approved by the headteacher or SLT.
- Give personal gifts or special favours, or disproportionately single specific pupils out for special duties or responsibilities.
- Offer overnight, weekend or holiday care as a respite to parents without the approval of the headteacher.

Where inappropriate contact is made with pupils, this will be raised with the headteacher and handled in line with the school's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and **Code of Conduct**.

If a pupil is attempting to befriend or contact a member of staff on social media, the member of staff will inform the headteacher as soon as possible.

Staff are strongly discouraged from forming personal relationships with former pupils, including on social media, as well as with the parents of any pupils on social media.

In the event of the school becoming aware of a close relationship between a member of staff and a former pupil which may raise concerns about their suitability to work with children, the headteacher will contact the LA designated officer (LADO) for advice and guidance.

Any inappropriate contact made with former pupils will be handled in line with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and **Code of Conduct**.

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.

11. Physical contact with pupils

All staff members will respect the personal space and privacy of all pupils and will avoid situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact.

The Trust and its academies understand 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 Trust/academy 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 considered.

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, or the CEO if the concern is about the Headteacher, and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate 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 pupil 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 always remain self-aware of their actions and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Employees 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 and academy's **Positive Handling Policy** and procedures. It is never appropriate for volunteers to involved in the physical restraint of pupils.

In all interactions with pupils, staff will always behave and act in a respectful and professional manner and staff will be aware that extra caution and consideration may be needed where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

12. [New] Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has a purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted, or refused to submit, to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment. When this behaviour is unwanted, it includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted physical conduct or 'horseplay' including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing.
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome.
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic, or material that some people might find offensive.
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless).
- Offensive emails, text messages or social media content.
- Comments and jokes of a sexual nature.
- Sexually suggestive looks and staring.
- Sexual propositions and advances.
- Promising things in return for sexual favours.
- Physical contact such as massaging, hugging or kissing.
- Sexual contact on social media.

Staff will help create a positive environment that works to prevent sexual harassment. This includes reporting any sexual harassment that they witness. All witnesses will be provided with appropriate support and will be protected from victimisation.

If a staff member is concerned at any point about incidents of sexual harassment (either directed at them or someone else), they should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of governors. The school will investigate any complaints in a timely, respectful and confidential manner.

All staff will receive training on recognising and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. The school will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation received to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved. The school will ensure that they take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the school environment and undertake risk assessments and action plans to put preventative measures in place.

13. 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.

Staff will adhere to the appropriate policies and risk assessments, e.g., PE risk assessment and ensure that appropriate supervision and support is given to all pupils, including those who may need assistance with showering and changing.

Employees will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy.

Staff will never change or shower in the same area as pupils.

14. Transporting pupils

Staff are aware that the safety and welfare of pupils is the responsibility of the school until pupils are with their parents. The school is committed to taking all possible safety measures to ensure the safety of 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.

For further information, staff should refer to their academy **Educational Visits and School Trips Policy**.

15. Financial inducements

Employees are obliged to declare to the management of the academy, in writing, any gifts received, apart from:

- low cost, functional items suitable for business rather than personal use and displaying the supplier's logo – these items may be accepted.
- non-excessive gifts offered by parents or pupils to express their gratitude, but employees 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 academy's business, which shall be at the academy's expense.

Employees must not accept a personal gift, payment, or other incentive from a business contact – any such gifts should be returned. They should declare any gift that cannot be returned to the Headteacher or CEO, who will decide how it will be used.

16. [Updated]Acceptable use of technology

Staff are aware of the benefits and challenges associated with using technology in school. When using technology staff will always adhere to the various procedures, freedoms and limitations outlined in the relevant Trust or academy policies, which include, but are not limited to:

- Acceptable Use Policy and Electronic Devices Policy
- Online Safety Policy

All staff will maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology, and read, sign, and adhere to the school's Technology Acceptable Use Agreement.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse.

Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology appropriately while under their care.

[New] Staff will use AI tools and technologies in accordance with the school's **Safe Use of AI Policy** and relevant procedures, including requirements relating to safeguarding, data protection, confidentiality and the appropriate use of school information.

17. Personal devices

Personal devices are used in accordance with the provisions outlined in the policies above and within the **Electronic Devices Policy** and **User Agreement**. Any personal electronic device that is brought into school is the responsibility of the user.

Personal devices are not permitted to be used in the following locations:

- Toilets.
- Changing Rooms.

Staff are not permitted to use their personal devices during lesson time, other than in an emergency.

Staff are not permitted to use their personal devices to take photos or videos of pupils.

18. Premises, equipment, and communication

Trust and academy equipment and systems are available only for school-related activities and will not be used for the fulfilment of another job or for personal use, unless specifically authorised by the Headteacher or CEO.

Illegal, inappropriate, or unacceptable use of Trust or academy equipment or communication systems may result in disciplinary action and could lead to an employee's dismissal.

Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material, or who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from their Headteacher or CEO.

The Trust and academy reserve the right to monitor emails, phone calls, internet activity or document production on school-owned equipment, principally to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems.

Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential except on the express request of the Headteacher or CEO or systems manager. Breaches of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

Communication systems may be accessed when the school 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 systems manager, only with the permission of the Headteacher or CEO.

School equipment that is used outside the premises, e.g., laptops, will be returned to the school when the employee leaves employment or if requested to do so by the Headteacher/CEO.

19. Photography, images and videos

All staff will act in accordance with the school's **Photography and Images Policy.**

Photographs, images and videos will only be taken using school equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited, and images of pupils will not be taken for personal use.

Staff will ensure that imagery and videos will be kept in an appropriate and secure place in school.

No pupil will be photographed in a state of undress or semi-undress, or in a situation which could be considered as indecent or sexual.

Staff will not take images of a pupil's injury, bruising or similar, e.g. following a disclosure of abuse, even if they have been requested to do so by children's social care, and staff members will not make audio recordings of any disclosure made by a pupil.

Consent for taking photographs will be obtained from parents or from the pupil themselves if they are deemed old enough and able to make the decision for themselves.

[Updated] Consent for the taking and use of photographs, images and videos will be managed in accordance with the school's **Photography and Images Policy and Data Protection Policy**.

Pupils who have not provided consent, either personally or via their parents, to have their photograph taken or to be filmed will have their wishes respected in line with the **Photography and Images 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 explain and 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.

20. Data protection and confidentiality

Regarding personal and sensitive data, the Trust and its academies are required, under the UK 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 will not disclose sensitive information about the Trust, academy, its employees, or pupils 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. In such circumstances staff should follow the appropriate policies and liaise with the academy's Headteacher and DSL or in the case of centrally employed staff the CEO.

Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them. Such requests will be made to the Headteacher in writing in accordance with the **Trust's Data Protection Policy**.

21. Probity of records

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

22. Contacts

Staff will not use school 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.

23. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed on a **biennial** basis by the Human Resources Director. Monitoring is conducted through the Trust's programme of quality assurance and that undertaken by the individual Academy. Changes to this policy are communicated to relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2028**.

Appendix

Dress code

Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the Trust) is committed to providing the best possible service to its students and the communities which we serve. We have a responsibility to enhance confidence in our academies and present a professional image of our organisation. This dress code is separate from policies on the use of protective clothing, which can be found in the respective academy's Health and Safety documentation.

This dress code has been developed with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in mind and schools will be mindful of individual's protected characteristics when applying and interpreting the code.

Overriding principles

The following standards apply to all members of our academies:

- Staff should dress in keeping with the professional image of a public sector service provider.
- Staff should dress appropriately for their job.
- Staff should not wear anything which represents a risk to health and safety.
- Staff should not wear anything which is likely to bring the academy and Trust into disrepute (i.e., potentially offensive badges, logos, or motifs).
- Staff should maintain high standards of personal hygiene and grooming.
- Staff should ensure that clothing is clean and tidy.
- Jeans and casual wear, and revealing garments are not deemed appropriate for the workplace.

Policy in practice

Our Trust expects all staff members to dress in keeping with their professional status and as a good example of a professional to both learners and visitors.

In essence the ethos we seek to create and maintain is one in which the general appearance of staff conforms to professional and respectful dress. Staff members who wish to wear appropriate formal clothing from their own culture or background may do so. All clothing should be smart, business-like, and appropriate.

Failure to adhere to an acceptable standard of dress, presentability, hygiene or grooming may result in the commencement of disciplinary action, if informal action to address the issues have failed.

Guidance

This guidance is provided for staff to clarify the staff dress code and is available to help determine what is appropriate to wear to work. It is designed to allow staff to work comfortably whilst recognising that all staff need to project a respectful image in keeping with their professional status. Clothing that works well for the beach, night clubs, pubs, etc. may not be appropriate for a professional appearance at work.

Formal occasions
Open Evening, prize giving, parents' evenings, parental meetings etc.

It is expected that all staff will be smart and well groomed. Formal business attire requires suits, or jackets with suit trousers/dresses/skirts and dress shirt/blouse, ties, and formal leather-like shoes.

Everyday wear
Trousers: Suit trousers or tailored trousers are acceptable. Inappropriate trousers include jeans, sweatpants, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, dungarees, leggings*, and any form-fitting pants such as those people wear for cycling. (*Leggings should only be worn under a dress or tunic that is of sufficient length that it doesn't reveal upper thighs.)

Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits: Dresses and skirts, and skirts that are split at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public.

Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. Mini-skirts, Bodycon dresses and skirts, sun dresses, beach dresses, maxi dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate.

Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets: Staff are expected to wear a tie with a dress shirt, with a suit jacket, sport jacket, or cardigan/sweater, if they do not violate any of the listed guidelines.

Members of staff may wear sweaters, blouses, shirts, or tops that are suitable for a business environment. It would be inappropriate to wear see-through blouses/tops/shirts, midriff tops, shirts with potentially offensive words/pictures, halter-tops, tops with bare shoulders, sweatshirts, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress.

Shoes and Footwear: Some footwear can increase the chance of accidents/injury happening. Wearing shoes that fit well, have sensible heels, and stay on the feet can reduce accidents/injury. Staff are therefore advised to wear closed toe and closed heel shoes and avoid certain footwear such as open-toed shoes, sandals, flip-flops, etc.

Hats and Head Covering
Hats are not appropriate in the office. Head covers that are required for religious purposes or to honour cultural tradition are allowed.

Staff who work in practical areas
It is acknowledged that for staff working in practical areas such as PE, Drama, and Dance, it is impractical for them to wear formal business attire and they should therefore dress appropriately for their roles, e.g., PE kit/track suit, black drama kit, etc.

Staff working in other practical areas such as DT and Art may wear more hardy trousers, such as chino style but should otherwise adhere to the standard dress code.

The premises, cleaning and catering teams are expected to wear the uniform supplied by their school.

Staff working in these areas must also wear shoes appropriate to the work they are undertaking e.g., non-slip shoes in the kitchen, steel capped shoes/boots in premises, trainers in PE, etc.

General notes

Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, back, chest, feet, stomach, or underwear is never appropriate. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is also unacceptable.

Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to others is unacceptable.

On own clothes days, jeans and other more casual clothing are allowed, but clothing that is potentially offensive to others is never acceptable.

No dress code can cover all contingencies so staff must exert a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear to work. Staff who experience uncertainty about acceptable, professional attire for work, should ask their line manager or HR staff.