

Title	Code of Professional and Safe Conduct
Associated Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Procedure (TPO/STA/22) • Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff (TPO/STA/21) • Teaching Staff Performance, Development and Career Progression (TPO/STA/17) • Support Staff Performance, Development and Career Progression (TPO/STA/05) • Safeguarding and Child Protection (TPO/HS/05) • Whistleblowing (TPO/STA/19) • Data Protection (TPO/STA/25) • Online Safety (TPO/STU/12)

REVIEWED: September 2022

NEXT REVIEW: September 2025

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Brooke Weston Trust and our academies foster a culture of the highest professional standards. The aim of this Code is to establish a common understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of all adults. The Code does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of work but represents a broad framework within which staff are expected to conduct themselves.
- 1.2 This Code of Professional and Safe Conduct complements other Brooke Weston Trust policies which set out rules and expectations of working for the Trust. Serious breaches of the professional and safe conduct policy may require further investigation under the appropriate disciplinary or capability policy, where standards of behaviour fall below what is expected.
- 1.3 This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Brooke Weston Trust ethos, which sums up the way we want to behave as an organisation. The 5 Brooke Weston Trust core values are:
 - Ambition for All
 - High Expectations
 - Excellent Teaching and Support
 - Working Together
 - Contribute to Society
- 1.4 This policy has also been drawn up in line with requirements and recommendations set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and must be read, understood, and applied alongside the academy policies.
- 1.5 In addition to this Code of Professional and Safe Conduct, all Teachers 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](#).
- 1.6 ‘[Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings](#)’ issued by the Safer Recruitment Consortium sets out key expectations for adult interactions with children and young people – the full guidance is available above.
- 1.7 Principals should refer to the [Headteachers’ Standards](#) for further non-statutory expectations of professional conduct.
- 1.8 This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and it may be amended following consultation with staff and trade unions. Where staff are subject to TUPE, if they had more favourable terms under a policy that was contractual, then these will continue to apply.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 Although the Code does not directly apply to contractors, consultants, employees working for third party organisations or volunteers, the Trust's continued association with these individuals and/or their organisations requires them to observe and comply with the Code. Failure to follow the expectations set out in the professional and safe conduct policy may result in agency workers being asked to no longer provide their services.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy, these individuals will be referred to as 'adults.'

3. Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

- 3.1 The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principals and Executive Leadership Team and will remain under constant review by Brooke Weston Trust and with the recognised Trade Unions.

4. Staff Expectations Summary

- 4.1 In summary, all adults are expected to work within the scope of their contract of employment, which is built on trust. That trust is damaged if the employee fails to:
- Attend work in a condition where they are able to carry out their duties in a safe, effective and responsible way.
 - Act honestly and be truthful in their dealings with members of the Brooke Weston Trust community.
 - Act with and treat others with professionalism, dignity and respect.
 - Work in accordance with the terms and conditions of their contract of employment and job description and go above and beyond these expectations where reasonably required to do so.
 - Carry out the reasonable instructions of their supervisors, managers, Principals and Executive Leadership Teams.
 - Understand and abide with the Brooke Weston Trust values, including the [Brooke Weston Trust Way](#).
 - Understand and abide by the Brooke Weston Trust policies and procedures.

Trust would also be damaged should an adult:

- Seek to deceive Brooke Weston Trust and its academies by withholding information, giving false information, damaging, or altering records or documents without authorisation.
 - Misrepresented Brooke Weston Trust in their dealings with others or make any statement on behalf of the Trust which they are not authorised to do.
- 4.2 Adults are all responsible for creating a positive working environment and behaving in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable conduct. Adults 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 employees will attempt to resolve matters informally and professionally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case, they should refer the matter to their line manager.
- 4.3 All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace should not compromise their position within the Trust or bring the Trust into disrepute.
- 4.4 Brooke Weston Trust expects all staff to lead by example and to:
- Treat colleagues, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, visitors and members of the public with dignity and respect and in line with the Brooke Weston Trust values.

- Be consciously aware that they are role models to students and therefore should lead by example.
 - Refrain from using inappropriate, discriminatory or offensive language at all times.
 - Ensure the welfare and safety of students and not engage in any activity that would compromise this fundamental obligation.
- 4.5 The expectations set out in this policy are relevant at all times when an individual is representing the organisation. This included on educational visits and school trips, where the less formal approach adopted in extra-curricular activities generally can be open to misinterpretation. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within the Academy.
- 4.6 Employees must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of their academy, the Trust or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 4.7 Behaviour or activities that have the potential to make employees unsuitable for the role they are employed to perform may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy (TPO/STA/22).
- 4.8 Staff should not make contact with students outside of official working hours or academy/Trust sanctioned extra-curricular activities unless in exceptional circumstances and only via Trust communication equipment (e.g. a company mobile phone or work email account). Staff should never make contact with students via a private/personal phone and/or email account.
- 4.9 The Professional and Safe Conduct Policy is not an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for adults. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the following categories:
- Confidentiality
 - Dress Code
 - Use of Electronic Devices (Including Mobile Phones and Photography)
 - Use of the Internet (Including email and Social Media)
 - Smoking, Vaping, Drug and Alcohol Use
 - Relationships Towards Students
 - Physical Contacts and Personal Privacy
 - Transporting Students
 - Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 Confidential information can take various forms and be held and transmitted in various ways e.g. manual records (files, reports and notes), verbal discussions and electronic records. As a general rule, all information received in the course of working with the Trust, should be regarded as sensitive and confidential and must not be disclosed or divulged within or outside the Trust other than in accordance with the requirement of the role and/or where specific permission has been provided. Where required advice should be sought prior to disclosure to ensure such disclosure are made in accordance with the Data Protection Policy (TPO/STA/25).

NOTE: All adults must be aware that they are obliged to disclose information relating to child protection issues and should make it clear to the individual either that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and/or decline to receive the information and direct them to a more appropriate person e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If an individual makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the adult must follow the Trust and individual academy's procedures and the guidance as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE). Please refer to the Brooke Weston Trust Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff (TPO/STA/21).

- 5.2 Confidential information must be held securely and must not be held off the academy/Trust site other than on security protected Trust equipment. The information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.
- 5.3 If an adult is unsure about the storage of or sharing of information they must seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

6. Dress Code

- 6.1 An individual's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, first impressions are important, and Brooke Weston Trust expects all Adults to dress appropriately and professionally as a role model to pupils.
- 6.2 Adults should wear professional smart business dress and ensure that they are dressed safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake, depending on the nature of their job. Clothing must be modest and not revealing and all employees are expected to be neat, clean, tidy and well-groomed whilst at work, whether working on the Trust's premises or elsewhere.
- 6.3 Certain items are not permitted at work under any circumstances, except on those occasions specifically stated by the Principal, examples of such are given below:
- Sweatshirts or T-shirts bearing slogans, symbols or political statements
 - Jeans and leggings
 - Trainers and flip-flops
 - Vest tops, camisoles or strapless tops
- 6.4 The Trust recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. The Trust will not be discriminatory in respect of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 for age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 6.5 In addition, where the Trust provides an item or items of uniform to enable the employee to carry out their duties, this must be worn at all times whilst on duty.
- 6.6 In serious cases, where in the opinion of the Principal, an employee's appearance is unacceptable, the employee may be required to return home to change. In these circumstances, the employee may not be paid for the duration of their absence from work.

7. Use of Electronic Devices (Including Mobile Phones and Photography)

- 7.1 Brooke Weston Trust recognises that electronic devices and media are important tools and resources in an educational context and can save time and expense. Those using Trust equipment and networks are expected to do so responsibly and to comply with all applicable laws, policies and procedures, and with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.
- 7.2 Where provided, staff must use Trust-issued mobile phones when contacting parents or students. Under no circumstances should staff be providing their personal phone numbers to parents or students. Staff must use phones provided by the school to conduct all work-related business.
- 7.3 Staff will limit personal mobile phone use to times when pupils are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags, cupboards, or out of site during contact time with students.
- 7.4 Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras. Staff will only take pictures or recordings of pupils and colleagues when authorised to do so.
- 7.5 Individual schools will have their own mobile phone guidance to be followed whilst on their sites, and staff should familiarise themselves with this.

7.6 Staff should be familiar with, and follow, the expectations set out in the BWT Electronic Communication Use and Management Guidance.

7.7 All staff should also read and sign the Trust IT Acceptable Use Policy (TPO/STA/) on an annual basis

8. Use of the Internet (Including email and Social Media)

8.1 All staff must be aware that no email sent using their employee account is private. It is therefore very important to use professional language at all times as any communications could and may be made public at any time. The Trust has a separate policy on Internet use, electronic communication and security (BWT Electronic Communication Use and Management Guidance).

8.2 Under no circumstances should Trust staff access inappropriate images in their academy or offices. Deliberately accessing pornography or inappropriate images will be treated as gross misconduct and may be a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the Internet and making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal and is likely to lead to criminal prosecution and may result in an individual being barred from working with children and young people.

8.3 As with all personal internet use, staff, governors and volunteers using social media sites should not access social media sites for personal reasons during working time.

8.4 Adults are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media and the internet and must bear in mind that what is published may fall into the public domain. Adults must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected and must not post material which damages the reputation of the Trust, make potentially defamatory remarks towards the school, the Trust or its community, or post anything which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Adults must not represent their own views/opinions as being those of the school or the Brooke Weston Trust, and they should not use any offensive or discriminatory language.

8.5 It is recommended that adults ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

8.6 Staff and volunteers must not give their personal details, such as telephone number, personal email address or social networking details to students unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management. If a student attempts to locate an adult's personal contact details and attempts to contact or correspond with them, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager

8.7 Brooke Weston Trust requests that complaints are made in line with the Complaints Policy (TPO/QA/02) which is a constructive approach to address any concerns, rather than negative opinions or complaints being aired on social media platforms. No conversation about any matter of complaint or dispute should be shared by members of staff via any social media channel. They should instead refer the issue to the relevant senior member of staff.

8.8 Adults should not accept students as 'friends'. Students should not be discussed on social media sites and information must not be posted that would disclose the identity of students. Photographs or videos of students or their homes must not be posted on social media sites.

8.9 In the event that a dispute with a third party or parent is initiated or perpetuated by means of social media this must be reported to the Principal as soon as possible. No response to any post should be made until directed to do so.

9. Smoking, Vaping, Drug and Alcohol Use

9.1 Brooke Weston Trust will not tolerate the presence or misuse of illegal drugs, drugs with no accepted medicinal purpose, alcohol or other prohibited substances (together referred to as "drugs" in this policy) on its property, on off-site school trips or events in which students are being supervised.

- 9.2 Brooke Weston Trust adopts a no-smoking/vaping policy at all of its sites for adults and students alike. All adults who wish to smoke/vape may do so in their own time during designated breaks and offsite. Members of staff are not permitted to smoke/vape whilst carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Any smoking of vaping products must be stored securely and safely away from students.
- 9.3 It is illegal for any person to be found in possession or to supply illegal drugs. Should illegal drugs or alcohol be found in the possession of an Adult, an investigation under the Disciplinary Policy may be carried out as well as notifying the police of any illegal activity. In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs the Academy will endeavour to:
- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout;
 - Seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present;
 - Store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior members of staff;
 - Normally notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols;
 - Record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number;

Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

10. Professional Relationships Towards Students

- 10.1 All staff must maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of, implement, and comply with, safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures and act as a positive role model to students.
- 10.2 All staff must observe boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.
- 10.3 Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. This is relevant on and offline. If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may have been misinterpreted, they must report this to the Principal.
- 10.4 Staff should avoid spending time on a one-to-one basis with students, although it is recognised that there may be occasions when one-to-one meetings may be required. Where this is the case, staff will ensure:
- This takes place in a location that others can access
 - Others can see into the room
 - A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place
- 10.5 Staff should avoid contact or communication with students outside of agreed working hours, unless as part of pre-arranged activities by the academy, or in exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the Principal and parent and carer. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes contact mobile phone numbers and social media.
- 10.6 Staff must not:
- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advance and/or a student or family's detriment
 - Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students

- Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a student, which is of a personal or sexual nature

Attempt to initiate a relationship which is of a sexual nature, with a recent ex-pupil. This will include ex-pupils under the age of 18 and/or those who have left the academy within the previous 25 months.

- 10.7** Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. When using teaching materials of a particular sensitive nature, staff should be aware of the danger and that their selection could be misinterpreted and may be criticised after the event. Care should be taken to ensure that any potential areas of risk or sensitivity are highlighted in advance.
- 10.8** The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about a subject matter of a sexually explicit nature or otherwise sensitive issue. Responding to students' question can require careful judgement and staff should exercise their professional judgement in responding to such questions.

Sexual contact with young people and abuse of trust

- 10.9** Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff, volunteer or governor with or towards a young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 specifically establishes an offence of a person over 18 engaging in sexual activity with a child under 18, where the person over 18 is in a position of trust over the child. All staff within education are in a position of trust.
- 10.10** Adults must not have sexual relationships with students or have any form of communication with a child, which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, electronic mail, phone calls, social networking contact or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students. Adults should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.
- 10.11** Sexual abuse is defined as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence whether or not the child is aware of what is happening" Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*).
- 10.12** There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' for which the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person and manipulate the relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a student has the potential to be construed as grooming which is a criminal offence.
- 10.13** A relationship between a member of staff, volunteer or governor and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is the potential for exploitation and harm and all adults have the responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Infatuations or Crushes

- 10.14** Adults must recognise that a student may be strongly attracted to a member of staff and develop an infatuation. Any member of staff who becomes aware that such an infatuation may be developing

must report this immediately to the Principal and DSL/DDSL. The situation must be taken seriously, and the adult must be careful not to give any encouragement.

11. Physical Contact and Personal Privacy

- 11.1** There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for a member of staff to have physical contact with students but it is crucial that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Where physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, ethnicity and background. Staff must:
- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
 - Never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent
 - Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact could be open to scrutiny
 - Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable student in a demonstration
 - Always explain to a student why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take, unless their safety is at immediate risk
 - Share information in accordance with safeguarding procedures
- 11.2** Physical contact must never be secretive or casual or for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances must be reported to the Principal or Vice Principals immediately.
- 11.3** There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and re-assurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not viewed as threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Where a member of staff is concerned about the need to provide this sort of care and re-assurance they should seek advice from a senior manager.
- 11.4** Some staff, such as PE staff and those who provide music tuition, may have to initiate physical contact in order to demonstrate the use of equipment or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum amount of time and take place in an open environment.
- 11.5** Physical contact which occurs regularly with a student is likely to raise questions unless the justification is part of a formally agreed plan, e.g. in relation to students with SEND or physical disabilities. Where feasible staff should seek the student's agreement and the physical contact should be for the minimum amount of time and take place in an open environment.
- 11.6** Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower, however there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying does not occur. Staff must:
- Avoid any physical contact when pupils are in a state of undress
 - Always consider the supervision needs of students, and only remain in the room where the students' needs or age require this
- Not change in the same place as students or shower with students
- 11.7** Staff who have to administer First Aid should ensure whenever possible that other students or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued. Wherever possible, staff that have to help students with physical disabilities should be accompanied by another adult.

12. Transporting Students

- 12.1** In certain circumstances staff, volunteers or governors may agree to transport students. Wherever possible transport arrangements should be made in advance and wherever possible practicable transport should be provided other than private vehicles and preferably at least one additional adult accompanying the driver as an escort. It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a student, unless the need has been agreed with a manager and, if this falls outside their normal working duties, has been agreed with parents/carers.
- 12.2** Adults should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the driver of the vehicle meet all legal and insurance requirements and health and safety considerations.
- 12.3** There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

13. Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

- 13.1** All staff, volunteers and governors must be vigilant and have a duty to share and report concerns or incidents. Staff have a number of mechanisms for sharing concerns, depending on the nature of the incident.
- 13.2** Adults are required to notify the School immediately of any allegations of misconduct that are of a safeguarding nature made against them (or implicating them), by a child or adult in relation to any outside work or interest (whether paid or unpaid) and, of any arrest or criminal charge whether child-related or not.
- 13.3** In the first instance, where a person has reason to suspect that another member of staff or adult may have behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child, or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, they should immediately inform the Principal. Further guidance on Allegations of Abuse Against Staff can be found in the Policy (TPO/STA/21).
- 13.4** Low Level Concerns are concerns which do not meet the threshold set out above can be reported by following the guidance in the Low Level Concerns Policy (TPO/HS/13). These may be behaviours that are inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- 13.5** Whistleblowing is the mechanism for the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work which are in the public interest. The procedures for doing so are outlined in the Brooke Weston Trust's policy on Whistleblowing (TPO/STA/19).

14. Other Matters

- 14.1** Outside interests and additional employment: Whilst staff's life away from school is their own concern, they should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict of interest with their job at the school.
- 14.2** Other issues in relation to conduct are set out in the Trusts HR policies. The conduct set out in those documents will set out the Trust's position on issues including:
- Accepting gifts & hospitality (Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy (TPO/QA/01))
 - Disclosure of criminal convictions (Disclosure & Barring Service Checks Policy (TPO/STA/03))
 - Confidential data (staff contracts, paragraphs 25-26)
 - Fitness for work (Staff Absence Policy (TPO/STA/13))
- Should you have any questions about anything not covered in this policy please refer to your line manager, Principal or the Trust HR Manager.

15. Policy Review

- 15.1 The implementation and impact of this policy will be monitored as part of the Academy's annual internal review and reviewed on a three-year cycle. This will be undertaken in consultation with the recognised trade unions

Document Control

Date of last review:	September 2022	Author:	Trust HR Manager
Date of next review:	September 2025	Version:	5
Approved by:	Safeguarding Review Group	Status:	Ratified

Summary of Main Changes

- Included links to key reference documents (**section 1**)
- Included summary of staff expectations, including professional conduct, alignment with the Brooke Weston Trust way (**section 4**)
- Revised dress code to set out overarching principle of dress to be professional, safe and appropriate to the role, with some items of clothing/footwear excluded (**section 6**)
- Expanded section on use of electronic devices (**section 7**)
- Added paragraphs relating to delivery of curriculum topics of a sensitive nature (**paragraphs 10.8-9**)
- Added guidance under section on use of physical contact (**paragraph 11.1**)
- Removed specific section for educational visits and incorporated within the main body of the policy