

CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is effective for all academies within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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4.0	June 2019	TMET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated guidance from Safer Recruitment Consortium May 2019 Added guidance on when employees have children in TMET schools (p13)
5.0	March 2022	SPK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant re-write and additional content to reflect current best practice. Repetition of Safeguarding/KCSIE related matters minimised. External website links updated. Edits in Feb 2022 following JCC member feedback
6.0	September 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 updated to reflect updated KCSIE guidance 2022 re low level concerns

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff employed by TMET and sets out the Trust's expectations of the standards of conduct expected of them.

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1. Introduction

All employees are expected to comply with the law as it applies to their work, particularly in matters such as safeguarding of children, health and safety and data protection. They are also expected to carry out their duties diligently and in accordance with the relevant policies, procedures, rules and guidance approved by the TMET Board of Directors and/or the Executive Team.

This code does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. General Expectations

All TMET employees are expected to behave professionally and act with due diligence when performing work; with due regard to the interests of our pupils, health and safety rules and respect for the dignity of others (staff, pupils, parents, visitors and other stakeholders). All staff are expected to adhere to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. In particular, staff working in school settings (or required to visit such settings as part of their role) must familiarise themselves with the school's Behaviour and Safeguarding policies and 'Guidance for safer working practice'. Staff must report any concerns to their principal/line manager, regardless of how insignificant those concerns are thought to be. Low level safeguarding concerns relating to conduct will be addressed directly with the member of staff concerned, in accordance with TMET Disciplinary Policy if deemed necessary and the latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance. Any concerns will be recorded by the Principal (or nominated senior leader in their absence) using the 'Staff Safe' function in CPOMS. Safeguarding allegations that may meet the harm threshold will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer. Staff must attend any training in relation to the aforementioned policies, when required. Staff should be aware of and understand the arrangements for managing allegations against staff, the TMET Whistleblowing Policy and the procedures of the relevant Multi-agency Partnership (MAP).
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead to questions about their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported, investigated and recorded.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.
- When working, staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including

barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this code is followed.

All staff are expected to be abide by the '7 Principles of Public Life' (see Appendix A)

3. Scope

This code applies to all TMET staff. Teachers will be expected to act in accordance with the Teachers' Standards and this code is designed to help schools interpret Part Two of those standards. The standards set out in this code shall however, also apply to contractors, suppliers, volunteers, agency staff, Academy Council members and trustees

4. Personal Interest

Employees should act professionally. They should not abuse their position within the Trust or in the school to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person or obtain an advantage for themselves, whether financial or otherwise. They should not allow their personal interests to interfere with their work for TMET or at the school.

Employees should not use their position to advocate any one culture, or political ideology to pupils, or promote any particular religion. It is the direct responsibility of all employees to uphold British Values as defined in law from time to time.

To avoid any doubt or unwarranted suspicion, employees should tell their line manager/ principal at school about a personal interest which might compromise, or be seen as compromising their position in the school. If in doubt about what should be declared they should seek advice.

Examples of personal interests include:

- Situations in which the employee's job (for example, as principal or business manager) could unduly influence decisions on contracts into which the school has entered or is proposing to enter, or where an employee has a personal or financial interest in any of the contracts, either directly or indirectly (for example, through a partner or relative).
- Where an employee holds a position with an external company or organisation, whether paid or unpaid, which may lead to a conflict of interest. (Examples include directorships of companies, serving on bodies such as charities, voluntary groups, governing bodies of other educational establishments.)
- If an employee has a close personal relationship with a person who has influence over the employee's employment within TMET or whose employment the employee could influence or control.

5. Gifts and hospitality

The offer of any gift or hospitality, whether from outside or inside the organisation, which might be interpreted as an attempt to influence an employee in his or her conduct towards pupils, parents or other employees, or influence a decision around provision of a service must be treated with caution. Employees should seek advice if in any doubt. The Trust acknowledges that pupils, parents or fellow-employees often wish to make small gifts (such as sweets) to employees on specific occasions (such as Christmas or at the end of the school year) and sees the spirit of giving as one to be nurtured in children. Any offer of a gift or inducement, whether made at specific

occasions or casually, should be declared if the gift is made by, or indirectly by, a person, firm or organisation which, to the knowledge of the employee, has, or seeks to do, business of any kind with the School, or to have an interest in its decisions.

The receipt of minor articles, often by way of trade advertisements, as unsolicited gifts for the school rather than for personal use (e.g. diaries, calendars, office requisites, etc., which are customarily distributed at Christmas and, occasionally, at other times) is acceptable.

Where there is any doubt, employees should seek guidance from their Principal/ Line Manager before accepting any gifts or hospitality offered. Staff must, within 28 days of accepting any gift or hospitality with an estimated value in excess of £25, provide notification to the Principal (CEO for centrally based staff) using the 'Declaration and Hospitality' form, attached to the TMET Gifts and Hospitality Policy. In relation to their own position the Principals/Line Managers should seek guidance from the Trust CEO, or their designated deputy and this should be documented accordingly. Employees should also take advice before making any gifts to external organisations, or to the employees of such organisations, which either provide services to the school/TMET or which are potential providers of such services. They should recognise that gifts could put themselves and/or the employees of those organisations in a difficult or embarrassing position.

Please also refer to the TMET Anti-fraud & Corruption Policy for further information.

6. Sponsorship - Schools

The individual school/academy is responsible for approving all sponsorship and should ensure that it gives guidance to employees on their involvement with the sponsorship, actual or proposed. Employees approached directly by actual or potential sponsors should refer the proposals to their Principal/Line Manager.

Where a school or parties to a school, sponsor an event or service, such sponsorship must comply with the TMET financial regulations framework, so that there is no improper benefit to the school or its Council Members, pupils and employees, including any partner, spouse or relative of any Council Member, pupil or employee of the school or any business with which they are associated.

7. General Confidentiality

Employees must comply with the law on data protection and freedom of information and observe the Trust's procedures for dealing with personal information about other employees, pupils or members of the public. Employees must ensure that they do not pass on any confidential, personal information received or obtained through their employment to anyone or any organisation not entitled to that information. This applies to passing on information to others inside or outside the school/Trust where those individuals are not entitled to that information. Employees must not use such information for personal advantage. Employees must, prior to disclosing any such information, seek guidance from their Principal/Line Manager if they are uncertain as to whether or not the information can be passed on to the person or organisation. The individual school is responsible for ensuring that the necessary guidance on the school's procedures for complying with the law, including GDPR principles, is made available to, and brought to the attention of, employees, including the arrangements for storing confidential information, whether held on paper or electronically.

Employees may request all the information held about them by schools or other public authorities in accordance with legislation on the Freedom of Information. These Subject Access Requests cover all kinds of records, including e-mails.

Disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act are covered in 9 below.

8. Duty to report

Employees should not conceal any matter which is their duty to report to the trust/school or appropriate public body. This includes their duties in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of children - see: [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

9. 'Whistleblowing'

Employees considering making a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act should ensure that they first inform themselves of the law and of the TMET Whistleblowing Policy, and take advice. Further Information on whistleblowing can be found at [Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://protect-advice.org.uk) (formerly 'Public Concern at Work').

10. Dealing with School Money

Employees must ensure that public funds are used in a responsible and lawful manner and in compliance with the Government's funding regulations for academies and the financial rules of the Trust.

11. Criminal Charges and Convictions

An employee must immediately notify their Principal/Line Manager if charged with, or convicted of, any criminal offence, or accepting a formal police caution. If the Principal/Line Manager is the subject of the matter, he or she must inform the TMET CEO, or their designated deputy. Depending on the circumstances failure to inform may result in disciplinary action. In all cases, a disclosure risk assessment shall be carried out immediately.

TMET acknowledges that a caution is not a criminal conviction, but employees must be aware that cautions have to be declared during Disclosure and Barring checks, unless they meet the filtering rules of the Disclosure and Barring Service.

TMET acknowledges that an employee charged with an offence is innocent until proved guilty. However, special considerations will apply if the offence is one of those which is on the list of offences relevant to safeguarding (a full list is available on the Disclosure and Barring Service's website) or if an employee is imprisoned on remand pending trial.

Information given to Trust will be treated as confidential and stored securely in the same way as other confidential personal information, having regard to the guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service on the length of time for which particular kinds of information should be stored.

12. Other Employment

Employees should ensure that any additional employment does not conflict with the capacity to fulfil the employee's contract of employment with the school.

Employees undertaking other employment must not use school time, or equipment for that purpose without the permission of their Principal/Line Manager.

Employees in any doubt should ask their line manager, or Principal for advice.

13. Intellectual Property and Copyrights

All intellectual property rights, (that is copyright, design rights and the right to patent inventions) relating to anything created or invented by employees in the course of their duties belong automatically to the Trust. Unless otherwise agreed, employees cannot exploit the rights to any such thing without written permission from the Trust CEO. For the avoidance of doubt, this provision relates to anything created or invented, at the direction of, or on behalf of the Trust, for which the staff member has received remuneration by way of salary or other payment via the Trust's payroll.

Principals may agree to their school collaborating with other schools to create or invent intellectual property to be shared with other schools.

Employees may use and print one copy of items which are the school's intellectual property for their personal and non-commercial use only, provided that all copyright and proprietary notices remain intact. They should not share these items with people or organisations outside the Trust without the permission of their Principal/Line Manager and they should be returned to the school/Trust on termination of employment.

14. Publications and Dealing with the Press

Employees must not make comments to the press or other media, including social networking sites, on behalf of the school unless specifically authorised to do so by the Trust CEO. Where requests for comments are received they must be passed on to the Principal/Line Manager, who will seek advice from TMET Central Office.

Employees should not publish any material which brings, or may bring, the Trust/school into disrepute.

Employees may make disclosures of public interest to other appropriate organisations, or the press (whistleblowing) provided that those disclosures meet the legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act and should take advice from their union or [Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](http://protect-advice.org.uk) before doing so. Please refer to the TMET Whistleblowing policy.

If employees wish to publish an article unconnected with the Trust or school then the article should not link them to the Trust/school.

15. Equipment and Materials

Employees must not use the equipment and premises of the Trust, or of other places where they work during their contract of employment, for unauthorised purposes. If they are permitted to use equipment, premises or materials for private purposes, the use must not interfere with the work of the school and they must pay any costs incurred, including costs of paper and printing. They may make personal telephone calls if necessary in their own time, paying for the cost of the call if they use a telephone belonging to the school. Permission for use of any facilities will be on the understanding that the use is reasonable.

Union facility time agreements permit the reasonable use of telephone with adequate privacy if available and also the use of printing and word processing equipment, where available, for union work within the school provided that such use is reasonable and does not interfere with the work of the school.

16. Former Political Restrictions

The legislation on political restrictions, exempting principals of schools, colleges or other educational establishments maintained by local authorities and also teachers and lecturers in such establishments, does not apply to TMET employees

17. Political, Philosophical & Religious Neutrality

The Trust will not concern itself with the political, philosophical or religious beliefs of individuals except where certain schools are specifically exempted from relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

However, employees who breach the relevant provisions of the Teachers' Standards, whether by reason of their beliefs or otherwise, may be subject to investigation under the disciplinary policy and procedure.

Employees may not display party political posters, including party political election material in Trust premises, or in a TMET school, unless it is part of the curriculum or used as a teaching aid (for example, in a lesson on citizenship).

18. Equal Opportunities

The Trust is committed to the promotion and implementation of equal opportunities both internally and externally.

The Trust aims to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with it is treated equally, and with courtesy and respect, and not in any way disadvantaged by factors which could prevent the implementation of fair policies and operations.

The Trust will recognise the differences which exist and will seek to understand the needs of people within the groups which are afforded protection or assistance through legal regulation and our policies.

The Trust expects all its employees to uphold its equal opportunity values, and employees must not discriminate, either in employment practices or in the provision of facilities and services by reference to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

19. Recruitment and selection

If involved in making appointments, employees must:

- Ensure that such appointments are made on the basis of a fair recruitment and selection procedure.
- Ensure that their personal preferences should not influence judgements made.
- Declare their interest where related to an applicant or having a close personal relationship outside school with an applicant. If a principal or recruiting manager has a personal relationship outside school this interest should be declared to the TMET CEO, or their designated deputy in the first instance. The CEO should report any declaration of interest to the Trust Board.
- Adhere to the TMET Recruitment Policy and statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' – [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

20. Alcohol, illegal substances and medication

The Trust accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available and acknowledges that some illegal substances are also readily obtainable. Employees must not use illegal substances. Employees must ensure that the use of alcohol out of school does not adversely affect their work performance, and that in accordance with their obligations under health and safety legislation, they take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and other workers whilst at work. The Trust will not accept employees arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs and whose ability is impaired by reason of the consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs or who consume alcohol in contravention of the Trust's policy on the consumption of alcohol or take illicit drugs on Trust

premises. They should also have regard to the expectation that they will not bring their school, or the Trust into disrepute.

All employees should note that in accordance with ESFA guidelines, no school monies should be spent on alcohol. These guidelines shall apply to all staff employed by the Trust, not just those based in schools. TMET will not tolerate any breach of these guidelines and/or other restrictions on expenditure set by the ESFA.

The Trust recognises that alcoholism and other addictions are illnesses and that employees should be offered appropriate support through the sickness/attendance management procedures. Management must also consider the effects of legally prescribed drugs or certain types of medication on the performance of employees and deal with these sympathetically, undertaking a risk assessment where necessary and taking occupational health or other specialist advice as appropriate.

Employees who are prescribed a type of medication which they have not taken before should make themselves aware of possible side-effects. In accordance with their duty to take reasonable care of their own and their colleagues' health and safety they should advise their Principal/Line Manager if the medication starts to affect their ability to do their job or travel safely to work, or if there is a likelihood that this will happen. The Trust/school will undertake risk assessments and take occupational health or other specialist advice as appropriate.

21. Health and Safety

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and to cooperate with management under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. These responsibilities are identified in the TMET Health and Safety Policy and any local rules.

Employees are required to act at all times in accordance with relevant policies and procedures and must generally act in such a way to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.

Any action which potentially puts at risk the health and/or safety of themselves or others will be viewed seriously and may be investigated under the disciplinary policy and procedure. Employees and other individuals may also face criminal prosecution for breaches of health and safety legislation.

22. Attendance

Employees' contracts of employment contain the main terms and conditions of their employment with the Trust.

Employees must follow the Trust's, or school's requirements for reporting absence due to sickness and for helping the Trust/school ensure that it has a record of all persons on the premises.

It is a fundamental requirement that employees are available for work during the hours specified in their contract.

23. Smoking

The Trust's premises are all non-smoking educational establishments. This includes the use of e-cigarettes and 'vaping'.

No-one is permitted to smoke in any of the classrooms or educational space, or any other building owned or occupied by the Trust/school, at any time. Smoking in contravention of the above may result in disciplinary action leading to dismissal.

24. Dress

There is a general expectation that dress will be appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the job and to any health and safety considerations. Each school will develop a dress code to meet its particular needs.

The Trust values and welcomes the ethnic diversity of all its teachers and support staff and therefore, dress codes will take account of ethnic and religious dress preferences with sensitivity ensuring that employees are free to observe them, subject to the needs of pupils' education. Schools should not impose a dress code requiring all staff to follow a much higher level of modesty than is normally accepted within British society.

25. Identity Badges

There is a requirement that all employees issued with identity cards/badges will carry them at all times in school or on trust premises and when they represent the trust/school and have them available for presentation, or inspection when required. The Trust/school may also expect employees to wear identity badges in order to assist pupils and visitors. All staff must sign in and sign out when entering/leaving their place of work, or when visiting other Trust premises, using their pass/fob, or manual systems that may be in place at the location.

26. Disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures

The Trust has formal policies for staff discipline, capability and grievances. The Principal/Line Manager should ensure that these are made available to all employees.

27. Following Instructions

Employees are expected to follow all reasonable and proper instructions by a person with the authority in the Trust to issue such instructions unless:

- There is a danger to a person's health and safety.
- They are in conflict with British Values as defined in law from time to time.
- There is good reason to believe that the instructions are improper, for example by conflicting with the safeguarding of children, the financial regulations or other aspects of the law.
- It does not comply with school policy and practice.

The Principal/Line Manager must be able to justify their instructions and decisions in line with their delegated authority and TMET/school policies and procedures, and be open to and respond promptly to questions.

28. Use of mobile phones/devices

Staff are not permitted to use their own mobile devices whilst pupils are present. This includes making or receiving calls, or sending texts. Use of personal mobile devices must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as a staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their mobile device during contact time e.g. for emergency contact by their child/their child's school or in the case of acutely ill dependents or family members. In such cases, staff members must seek permission from the principal to allow for special arrangements in advance. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, staff can use the school office number as a point of emergency contact.

Staff must not use their mobile devices to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

Please refer to TMET's *IT User Policy* for information for supplementary information about usage of mobile devices.

29. Photography, videos and other images / media

Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the school or setting.

At TMET we expect any images to be taken only where consent is explicit and using a TMET device. See our ICT user policy for more details.

Whilst images are regularly used for very positive purposes, adults need to be aware of the potential for these to be taken and/or misused or manipulated for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Particular regard needs to be given when images are taken of young or vulnerable children who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Pupils who have been previously abused in a manner that involved images may feel particularly threatened by the use of photography, filming etc.

For the protection of children, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed:

- if the image is used, avoid naming the child, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames)
- if the child is named, avoid using their image.

30. Exposure to inappropriate images

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the settings or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school or setting's equipment an immediate referral should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the police contacted if relevant. The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social care in line with local arrangements.

Under no circumstances should any adult use school or setting equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue working with children and young people.

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network, and the DSL contacted without delay. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as

this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility that they will be at risk of prosecution themselves.

31. Staff as Parents / Parents as Staff

Once you become a member of staff, your standing as a member of the wider community is open to scrutiny and criticism by members of the Trust, other parents and the general public who you may come into contact with. This makes it very difficult to engage in some social activities as a Parent and Teacher. Colleagues who fall into this category should:

- Evaluate each social situation sensibly and with caution;
- Never put themselves in a position where their actions could be misconstrued by others;

It is seen as a positive endorsement of the Trust's approach when TMET employees opt to send their children to Trust schools or indeed the school at which the employee works. When this is the case, it is important to maintain levels of professionalism as an employee and make a clear distinction between the parenting role and that of an employee;

Staff with children in Trust schools should ensure they follow the procedures set out for all parents, in terms of raising concerns informally or formally or in making appointments to speak to staff. It is important that pupils of employees are seen to be treated in the same way as other pupils and parents who are employees do not have preferential access to school staff;

In order to ensure no conflict of interest, TMET will endeavour where possible to ensure that children will not be taught directly by their parent, or managed directly within departments; and

Any colleagues in doubt should speak to their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team for advice.

APPENDIX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The 7 principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- local government
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- health, education, social and care services

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.