



Every Opportunity for Every Child

Alpha Trust

Staff Code of Conduct



Alpha Trust Policy & Procedures No: AT P19

Committee:	Board of Trustees
Responsibility:	CEO / Trust HR Manager
Policy reviewed:	June 2025 (February 2026)
Approved by Alpha Trustees:	March 2026
Review cycle:	Two years, or sooner depending on statutory changes or guidance
Review due:	July 2027
Adopted by all Alpha Trust Academies	



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Linked policies

- AT P22 Alpha Trust Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- AT2 - Alpha Trust Safeguarding Child Protection Policy and school Child Protection and Behaviour Management Procedures.
- AT P18 - Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- AT P14 - Alpha Trust Policy on Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations against Adults
- AT P7 Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Policy
- AT P3 Alpha Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Department for Education Statutory Guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education”

Changes since previous version (November 2025)

Page 3	Linked policies
9.4	Reference to expectations set out in the Alpha Trust Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AT P22)
Appendices A-E	Removal of individual school’s Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy



Alpha Trust Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction

- 1.1 The overriding expectation is that employees, volunteers and those engaged to work in The Alpha Trust and its constituent schools will adopt the highest standards of personal integrity and conduct both in and outside work. As role models they must behave, through their words and actions, at all times in a manner which demonstrates their suitability to work with children and which upholds the standards and reputation of the Trust and its schools.
- 1.2 This code of conduct provides an overall framework of the behaviours expected of individuals who work in the Trust and its schools. The code is not intended to be exhaustive and individuals should use sound professional, ethical and moral judgements to act in the best interests of the Trust, its schools, its pupils and its community.
- 1.3 This code should be read in conjunction with:
 - other Alpha Trust and school policies and procedures
 - the terms of any employment or service contracts and agreements
 - relevant professional standards

Scope

- 2.1 This Code applies to all individuals employed by The Alpha Trust or those engaged by the Trust or its schools including:
 - Relief/casual staff
 - Supply staff
 - Third parties providing services to the school (including the self-employed)
 - Voluntary workers
- 2.2 For the purpose of elements of this code applying to all individuals set out above, they are collectively referred to as “workers”.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to establish and monitor standards of conduct within the Trust and its schools, including the establishment of relevant policies and procedures. Trustees are subject to their own Code of Conduct.

Local Governing Bodies

- 3.2 It is the responsibility of Local Governing Bodies to establish and monitor standards of conduct and behaviour within the school, including the establishment of relevant policies and procedures. Governors are subject to their own Code of Conduct.

Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School and line managers

- 3.3 It is the responsibility of the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School and line managers to address promptly any breaches of acceptable conduct and behaviour, using informal procedures where possible but implementing formal procedures where necessary.

Employees

- 3.4 It is the responsibility of all employees to familiarise themselves with, and comply, with this Code. Any breaches of this Code of Conduct will be regarded as a serious matter which could result in disciplinary action, and in certain circumstances could potentially lead to dismissal.



Engaged workers/Volunteers

- 3.5 Engaged workers and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves, and comply, with this Code in so far as it is relevant to their role. Any breaches of this Code may result in the engagement of the worker/volunteer being terminated, in accordance with any applicable terms of engagement.

Reporting breaches of standards of good conduct

- 4.1 The Alpha Trust wishes to promote an open environment that enables individuals to raise issues in a constructive way and with confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately without fear of recrimination.
- 4.2 All employees, engaged workers and volunteers are expected to bring to the attention of an appropriate manager/Governing Board/Trustee any impropriety, deficiency in the provision of service or breach of policy or this Code. Where appropriate, individuals should also refer to the AT P7 Alpha Trust Whistleblowing Policy which is available from the school office and the Alpha Trust website.

The Code of Conduct

Safeguarding and Child Protection

- 5.1 It is essential that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. Adults must be clear about appropriate and safe behaviours for working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts, including outside work.
- 5.2 The relevant requirements specific to safeguarding and child protection are set out in:
- AT2 - Alpha Trust Safeguarding Child Protection Policy and school Child Protection and Behaviour Management Procedures.
 - AT P18 - Alpha Trust Management of Low-Level Concerns Policy.
 - AT P14 - Alpha Trust Policy on Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations against Adults
 - the Department for Education Statutory Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (as amended from time to time).
- 5.3 This is the key statutory guidance which all employees must follow, and all employees and volunteers must, as a minimum, read Part 1 of that Document.
- 5.4 "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 [here](#).
- 5.5 In addition, individuals should be aware that it is criminal offence (s 16. Sexual Offences Act 2003) 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 of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.
- 5.6 Individuals should familiarise themselves with these documents, in conjunction with the body of the Code of Conduct and other relevant Alpha Trust and school policies and procedures.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

- 5.7 As part of our Alpha Trust-wide approach to safeguarding, we promote a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which safeguarding is a shared responsibility and our values and expectations are lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff. **In this context, everyone is expected to report any and all safeguarding concerns as soon as they arise.** This includes an expectation of self-reporting where an individual finds themselves in a situation which may be, or appear to be, compromising or where they have fallen short of expectations.

- 5.8 Safeguarding concerns cover a wide spectrum from serious issues where a child is harmed or at risk to lower-level concerns where practice or behaviour is inappropriate, undesirable or not in keeping with usual expectations. This will include cases of inadvertent or accidental conduct and where individuals find themselves in situations which could be misinterpreted or make them vulnerable to allegations.

Who to report to

- 5.9 Concerns should be referred to the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School (or where the concerns relate to the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School, to the Chair of Governors or equivalent) or to the Designated Safeguard Lead (who will share information with the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School or Chair of Governors). In a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter internally, it should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs).
- 5.10 All issues raised will be dealt with in a sensitive and proportionate manner. While there are clear procedures in place for dealing with matters of misconduct and poor performance - including procedures for dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults at the school, our objective is to protect our young people and adults, by identifying and tackling issues early and providing advice, direction and support to improve our collective and individual practice.
- 5.11 To support these objectives, confidential records of all reported concerns and actions taken will be kept in order to identify any patterns, enable monitoring and to facilitate improvement in policy and practice.

Conduct outside work

- 6.1 The Alpha Trust recognises and respects individuals' right to a private life without interference. However, individuals connected with the Trust and its schools must not act in a way that would bring the Trust, school, or their profession, into disrepute or that calls into question their suitability to work with children. This covers relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, inappropriate behaviour such as lewd or offensive action, as well as negative comments about the Trust, the school or its community.
- 6.2 Workers must disclose to the school (Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School and in the case of the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors) immediately, any wrongdoing or alleged wrongdoing by themselves (regardless of whether they deny the wrongdoing/alleged wrongdoing), including any incidents arising from alternative employment or outside of work which may have a bearing on their employment or engagement with the Trust or school.
- 6.3 Employees should also refer to the expectations set out in their contract of employment and the disciplinary procedures.
- 6.4 In addition, any worker engaged in a post covered by the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 ("the Regulations") must immediately inform the school of any events or circumstances which may lead to their disqualification from working in the post by virtue of the Regulations. The statutory guidance relating to Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 can be found at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006#disqualification-under-the-childcare-act>.
- 6.5 Where a person engaged to work at the school is in a close personal relationship with a person who may pose a risk to children (e.g. a registered sex offender), this must be disclosed to the headteacher on a confidential basis so that appropriate measures can be put in place to protect the worker and the school.



Secondary employment

- 7.1 The Trust does not seek to unreasonably preclude employees from undertaking additional employment but employees are required to devote their attention and abilities to their duties at the Trust / school during their working hours and to act in the best interests of the Trust and the school at all times. Accordingly, employees must not, without the written consent of the school, take secondary employment or engagement once in post. This does not apply to those whose net average weekly earnings are at or below the lower earnings limit, although they should advise the school of any secondary employment so that the employer can have regard to any responsibilities it may have in relation to the Working Time Regulations.
- 7.2 Secondary employment or engagement must not interfere with the performance of the employee's duties with this employer. In addition, employees should not engage in business or employment activities which are incompatible with or might conflict with the Trust or the school's interests.

Confidentiality

General obligations

- 8.1 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 employment or whilst volunteering/being engaged by the Trust or the school, no matter how it is received, held or transmitted, should be regarded as sensitive and confidential and must not be disclosed or divulged within or outside the Trust / school other than in accordance with the requirement of the role and/or where specific permission has been provided.
- 8.2 **NOTE:** All workers 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.
- 8.3 The Alpha Trust is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses the personal data of its workforce, and to meeting its data protection obligations. Each school's Data Protection Policy sets out the school's commitment to data protection, and individual rights and obligations in relation to personal data.
- 8.4 Any actual or suspected/potential breach of data protection must be reported immediately to the school's Data Protection Officer.

Preserving anonymity

- 8.5 The Education Act 2011 contains reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material which could lead to the identification of a teacher in the event of an allegation against them made by a pupil at the same school. Any individual who publishes material which could lead to the identification of the employee who is the subject of an allegation of this kind may be subject to criminal and disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 8.6 "Publication" includes any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes publishing details of an allegation or other information on a social media site which could lead to the identification of the teacher.

Media queries

- 8.7 Workers must not speak to the press or respond to media queries on any matter relating to the school. All media queries should be referred immediately to the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School /Chair of Governors.



Use of computers, email and the internet and social media

- 9.1 The Alpha Trust recognises that electronic devices and media are important tools and resources in an educational context and can save time and expense.
- 9.2 Those using the Trust or school 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.
- 9.3 Personal use of social media and other on-line applications which may fall into the public domain should not be such that it could bring the school into disrepute and/or call into question an individual's suitability to work with children.
- 9.4 Detailed expectations are set out in the Alpha Trust Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AT P22).
- 9.5 Any worker who is unsure about whether or not something they propose to do might breach that policy or if something is not specifically covered in the policy, they should seek advice from their line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Relationships

The internal school community

- 10.1 All workers are expected to treat members of the school community with dignity and respect and to work co-operatively and supportively. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation will not be tolerated (see also the Alpha Trust Grievance Procedure).

The wider community and service users

- 10.2 All workers have a responsibility to ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community. No favour must be shown to any individual or group of individuals, nor any individual or group unreasonably excluded from, or discriminated against, in any aspect of school business.

Contracts

- 10.3 All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, must be made known to the Governing Board. Orders and contracts must be in accordance with standing orders and financial regulations of the school. No special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the awarding of contracts, tendering process or any other business transaction.

Gifts and Hospitality

- 10.4 Workers may not accept any gift or hospitality from a person intended to benefit from their services (or those whom they supervise) or from any relative without the express permission of the school.
- 10.5 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a school activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the sponsorship should always be related to the school's interests and never for personal benefit.
- 10.6 The Alpha Trust policy on gifts and hospitality (AT F3) is available from the school office or on the Alpha Trust website. Any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Neutrality

- 10.7 Workers must not allow their own personal, political, religious or other views and opinions to interfere with their work. They are expected to be neutral in their views in the course of their work at the school and to present a balanced view when working with pupils.

Close personal relationships at work

Definitions

11.1 Close personal relationships are defined as:

- workers who are married, dating or in a partnership or co-habiting arrangement;
- immediate family members for example parent, child, sibling, grandparent;
- other relationships for example extended family (cousins, uncles, in-laws), close friendships, business associates (outside the school).

Applicants

11.2 Applicants are required to disclose on their application form if they have a close personal relationship with any person connected with The Alpha Trust or the school. Applicants are asked to state the name of the person and the relationship. Failure to disclose such a relationship may disqualify the applicant.

11.3 Workers should discuss confidentially with their headteacher/line manager, any relationships with an applicant. It is inappropriate for any worker to sit on an appointment panel, for those with whom they have a close personal relationship. Further guidance on managing conflicts of interest within the recruitment process is available in AT P10 Recruitment Procedure.

Providing references

11.4 It is expected that, for those working with children, professional references, and not personal references, are sought and provided. All references provided on behalf of the school must be signed by the Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School (Chair of Governors for the Headteacher).

11.5 Anyone agreeing to act as a personal referee must make it clear in the reference that it is provided as a personal or colleague reference and is not a reference on behalf of the school. Personal or colleague references must not be provided on school headed paper.

General Conduct

11.6 Behaviour should always be appropriate for a school setting.

11.7 No-one should be involved in discipline, promotion, pay or other decisions for anyone where there is a close personal relationship.

11.8 Intimate behaviour during work time, in any workplace, such as holding hands, kissing, other close physical contact and discussions of a sexual nature are not permitted.

11.9 Unwanted sexual advances or harassment will not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action.

Disclosure

11.10 All close personal relationships should be disclosed, in confidence, to the line manager / supervisor by the individuals concerned as this may impact on the conduct of the school.

11.11 Whilst not all such situations where those in close personal relationships work together raise issues of conflict of interest, implications can include:

- effect on trust and confidence;
- perception of service users, the public and other employees on professionalism and fairness;
- operational issues e.g. working patterns, financial and procurement separation requirements;
- conflicting loyalties and breaches of confidentiality and trust.

- 11.12 Open, constructive and confidential discussion between workers and managers/supervisors is essential to ensure these implications do not occur and that all parties can be protected.
- 11.13 It may be necessary in certain circumstances to consider transferring workers that form close personal relationships at work. Any such action will be taken wherever possible by agreement with both parties and without discrimination.
- 11.14 We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from all forms of bullying¹, harassment² including sexual harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- 11.15 Colleagues who feel they are affected by a close personal relationship at work involving other colleagues should at all times feel that they can discuss this, without prejudice, with their Executive Principal / Principal / Headteacher / Head of School / line manager, other manager or Governing Board.
- 11.16 If you find yourself in a situation where you are bullied or harassed while you are at work, including where a personal relationship has broken down, we encourage you to report this immediately to your line manager.

Workers related to pupils

- 11.17 Any workers related to, or who are the carer of a pupil are expected to separate their familial and employment role.
- 11.18 Workers must not show or provide any preferential treatment to them or become involved in their education or care beyond their specific role as an employee/volunteer or their role as a parent/carer/relation. Workers must report familial relationships to the Examinations Officer in their setting.

Dress code

- 12.1 Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should also be fit for purpose according to the specific role and activity for example appropriate dress for PE, outdoor activities etc. These standards will apply to all official school activities, including on-line/virtual teaching.
- 12.2 In all cases dress should be such that it:
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;
 - does not distract or cause embarrassment;
 - does not include political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans; and
 - is not considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally insensitive.
- 12.3 Additional specific dress code requirements for each school within the Alpha Trust are set out at Appendix F.

¹ ACAS notes (www.acas.org.uk/bullying-at-work) that there is no legal definition of bullying, but it can be described as unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is either

- offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting;
- an abuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

² Harassment can be defined as “improper, offensive and humiliating behaviour, practices or conduct, which may threaten a person’s job security, create an intimidating, unwelcoming and stressful workplace, or cause personal offence or injury.” (ACAS)



Use of financial resources

- 13.1 Workers must ensure that they use public and any other funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They must strive to ensure value for money and ensure rigorous adherence to Financial Regulations which are set out in AT F1 Alpha Trust Finance Policy and Procedures.

School property and personal possessions

- 14.1 Workers must ensure they take due care of Trust and school property at all times, including proper and safe use, security, appropriate maintenance and reporting faults. If employees are found to have caused damage to Trust or school property through misuse or carelessness this may result in disciplinary action.
- 14.2 Workers are responsible for the safety and security of their personal possessions while on Trust or school premises. The Alpha Trust and its schools will not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of personal possessions.



Dress Codes for Alpha Trust Schools

Colchester County High School for Girls

All staff must have a smart professional look – formal business clothing is the best guide.

Expectations

- For male staff: a suit or smart trousers, jacket/blazer, a collared shirt and tie, with top button done up.
- For female staff: a smart dress or skirt/trousers with blouse or appropriate smart top; a jacket is preferred; a formal cardigan may be worn. Skirt/dress length should be a minimum of just above the knee.
- Staff in leadership and managerial positions should routinely wear a jacket/suit.
- Smart shoes or boots should be worn. They should be suitable for a working environment – no high stilettos or flip flops for health & safety reasons. No 'Ugg boots' or similar styles; no over the knee boots. All staff are responsible for ensuring that their footwear does not prevent them from carrying out their duties or activities in a safe and effective way.
- Trainers should not be worn except for medical reasons and by PE staff.
- Staff should not wear denim, leather, leggings, short skirts, 'strappy' or low-cut tops, cut out shoulders.
- Hair style or colouring should not be extreme.
- Jewellery should be discreet.
- Facial piercings, body piercings or excessive ear piercings should not be worn and any tattoos not visible.

The Executive Principal/Associate Principals are entitled to apply their discretion in determining the image of the school/academy, including the personal presentation of staff, especially if they are in a position of authority, projecting an appropriate image to students, parents and members of the public.

The Gilbert School

Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should also be fit for purpose according to the specific role and activity for example appropriate dress for PE, outdoor activities etc. These standards will apply to all official school activities, including on-line/virtual teaching .

In all cases dress should be such that it:

- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- does not distract or cause embarrassment.
- does not include political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans; and
- is not considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally insensitive

The Trinity School

Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should also be fit for purpose according to the specific role and activity for example appropriate dress for PE, outdoor activities etc. These standards will apply to all official school activities, including on-line/virtual teaching .

In all cases dress should be such that it:

- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;
- does not distract or cause embarrassment;
- does not include political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans; and
- is not considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally insensitive



Manningtree High School

Adults in school are expected to adopt smart standards of dress which project an appropriate professional image to pupils, parents and members of the public. Dress should also be fit for purpose according to the specific role and activity for example appropriate dress for PE, outdoor activities etc. These standards will apply to all official school activities.

In all cases dress should be such that it:

- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;
- does not distract or cause embarrassment;
- does not include political, offensive or otherwise contentious slogans; and
- is not considered to be discriminatory and/or culturally insensitive

Home Farm Primary School

Professionalism with Practicality

At Home Farm Primary School, we expect all staff to dress in a manner that is professional, appropriate for their role, and suitable for the varied demands of working in a primary school environment.

We recognise that staff need to move freely, engage with children at their level, and teach a diverse curriculum that includes physical activity, outdoor learning, and creative subjects.

Our dress code is therefore guided by the principle: **“Professional, practical, and appropriate for the occasion.”**

General Expectations:

- Clothing should be modest and professional. Staff should avoid garments that are overly revealing — including those that expose midriffs, low necklines, or are transparent.
- Tops such as strapless, spaghetti straps, or low-cut vests are not appropriate for school settings.
- Skirts and shorts should be of a reasonable length, allowing comfortable movement while maintaining professionalism.
- Underwear should not be visible through or above clothing.

Footwear:

- Staff are expected to wear shoes that are safe, practical, and suitable for the varied activities of the school day.
- Footwear should provide sufficient support and protection to allow staff to move comfortably around classrooms, corridors, and outdoor areas.
- While open-toed shoes or sandals are not prohibited, they are discouraged on a health and safety basis, as they may increase the risk of slips, trips, or injury, particularly during physical activity, playground duty, or outdoor learning.
- Staff are expected to use professional judgement when selecting footwear to ensure it is appropriate for their role and the activities planned.

PE and Physical Activity:

- Gym wear should be worn only when teaching PE or engaging in similar physical activities. Where possible, staff should change into appropriate teaching attire after sessions.
- PE clothing should be functional, modest, and suitable for active teaching. Cropped tops or tight-fitting leisurewear intended for gym or fashion purposes are not acceptable.

Piercings, Tattoos and Body Modification:

Whilst we respect every individual's history and right to self expression, for safety, professional and safeguarding reasons there are some limits to what can be shown and worn whilst in school.

- Piercings should be kept discreet and, for safety reasons, limited to studs or retainers. Large hoops, chains, or dangling jewellery are not permitted.
- Visible tattoos must not contain imagery or text that is sexual, offensive, age-inappropriate, or political in nature

Additional Guidance:

- Clothing should be free from offensive or political slogans, large commercial logos, or imagery inappropriate for a primary-aged setting.
- Casual denim jeans are not permitted.
- Religious and cultural dress is welcomed and respected, provided it meets the standards of safety and professionalism outlined above.