EQUA Mead
Learning Trust
Every Child, Every Chance

Policy Name	Staff Code of Conduct and Safer Working Practice Policy 2026-27
Policy Lead	Deputy CEO / HR Director
Adopted by Trust Board	Sept 2024
Last amended	Sept 2025
Last review	June 2026
Next review	July 2027

Key Safeguarding Personnel			
Role	**Name**	**Telephone**	**Email**
Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Paul Skipp (CEO)**	**1225 927060**	**pskipp@equamead.org**
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	**Lyssy Bolton (DCEO)**	**1225 927061**	**lbolton@equamead.org**
DDSL	**Jayne Bullock (School Improvement Co-Ordinator)**	**1225 711162**	**jbullock@equamead.org**
HR Director	**Ellie Green**	**1225 711155**	**egreen@equamead.org**
Chair of Trustees	**Patrick Hazlewood**		**phazlewood@equamead.org**
Designated Safeguarding Trustee	**Daniela De Cet**		**danieladecet@equamead.org**
The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)			
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Children's Social Care referrals: Integrated Front Door (IFD): Out of hours:			0300 456 0108 0300 456 0108 0300 456 0100
If you believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury, you must call the police on 999			

Introduction

EQUA Mead Learning Trust is committed to providing positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our children, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and colleagues. Accordingly, and without limitation to this code of conduct, staff, governors, trustees and volunteers shall conduct themselves in a safe, positive and professional manner at all times.

1. This policy reflects national and local requirements to protect and support the children and adults in our schools. We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- The procedures of Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)

2. This policy:

- is based on the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2023).
- aims to provide a guide for adults about acceptable and desirable conduct to ensure that staff maintain safe working practice and safeguard both children and adults.
- does not provide a complete checklist of appropriate behaviour for staff in every circumstance. Staff must make judgements about their behaviour to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.
- forms part of a staff member's contract of employment and failure to comply with it, along with the associated school policies, may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where this is warranted.

3. In *very exceptional* circumstances where a member of staff believes it is in the best interest of a child to breach these guidelines, that person **must** tell the headteacher of the justification for any proposed, or action already taken, at the earliest opportunity. The headteacher will make a written record of that discussion including any areas of disagreement and actions taken.

Scope

4. This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the trust board and should be read alongside the following documents relevant to the safety and welfare of our children:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy,
- Online Safety Policy,
- Whistleblowing Policy,
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy,
- Health and Safety Policy,
- Staff Disciplinary Policy

5. This policy applies to all Staff, Governors, Trustees, Volunteers, Agency Workers, and anyone working in a position of Trust working in our schools. For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Staff' refers to all those working for the school, full time or part time, on a temporary basis, or permanent, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity and includes Trustees and Local Governors.
- A 'volunteer' is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid in this school (except for approved expenses).
- A 'position of trust' is one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another, due to their work or the nature of their activity.
- 'Child' refers to all children up to the age of 18. All adults are in positions of trust in relation to every

child (and student over the age of 18) at our school.

6. **It does not apply to** employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners). Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

Expectations

7. All staff should be familiar with this policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review. Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, be aware that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct in this Policy may result in action being taken under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure. This includes dismissal, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity.

Safeguarding pupils

8. In accordance with Keeping children safe in education KCSIE, all staff members have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and protect and promote their welfare.

9. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that they provide a learning environment in which pupils feel safe, secure and respected.

10. To effectively safeguard pupils, staff members are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, ensuring that they do not act in a way that may put pupils at risk of harm, or lead others to question their actions.

11. In accordance with each school's Behaviour Policy and EQUA Mead Learning Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff members will be prepared to identify pupils who may be subject to, or at risk of, various types of abuse and neglect, including, but not limited to, the following:

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

12. Copies of policies and a copy of Part one of KCSIE will be provided to staff at induction. Staff will have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures with regards to safeguarding issues, e.g. abuse, and the important role they play in preventing harm against pupils.

13. In accordance with the EQUA Mead Learning Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff will also be aware of the factors that could increase a pupil's risk of being subject to safeguarding issues, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
- Pupils requiring mental health support.
- LAC and previously LAC.

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Pupils struggling with mental health needs.
- Pupils who have a family member in prison, or who are affected by parental offending.
- Pupils that are frequently absent or permanently excluded from school.

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

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

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

17. Any staff member that has concerns about another staff member's (including volunteers and supply staff) actions or intent, or believes these actions may lead to a pupil being put at risk of harm, will report this in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy or Whistleblowing Policy immediately so appropriate action can be taken.

18. Upskirting is not tolerated by the school and any incidents of upskirting must be reported to the DSL who will decide on the next steps to take, which may include involving the police.

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

20. Staff will be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. Staff will also be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care service (CSCS) and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.

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

22. Staff will be aware that confidentiality must never be promised to a pupil – staff will understand the procedure for if a pupil discloses a potential safeguarding issue, in accordance with Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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

- The harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual.
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence.
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity or would have been removed if they had not left their post.

Mandatory Procedures

24. Data Protection & Confidentiality

Staff members are required, under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, to:

- Consider the legal basis for collecting the data, ensuring that this is documented.
- Ensure that the data is stored on a GDPR-compliant server, and that the data is not held for any longer than necessary.
- Securely dispose of the data when the relevant retention period ends.
- The sorting and processing of personal information is governed by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations 2018) and is outlined in the Trust's Data Protection Policy. Child records are shared with those who have a professional need to see them. When staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, children or their parents/carers, the staff must treat such information in a sensitive and confidential way, sharing it only in the interests of a child and when legally permitted to do so.
- Trustees and Local Governors should not routinely access child records. Exceptions to this would be for the purpose of an investigation in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy.
- Staff, governors and trustees will not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment.
- If a member of staff is concerned that a child is being abused, is at risk of being abused or may have been abused in the past, they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'What to do if you are worried about a child', displayed in the staff room/staff cloakrooms. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Sep 25).
- If a member of staff is ever in any doubt about whether to share information or not, they should get advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

The only exception whereby it is acceptable for a staff member to disclose information that would otherwise be considered confidential is when the confidential information gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.

25. Employee relationships with children and parents

- All staff know that they are in positions of trust in relation to all children (and students over the age of 18) on roll. They ensure that the power imbalance is never used for personal advantage or gratification. They avoid behaviour which might be interpreted by others as an abuse of the position of trust and report any incident with this potential to their manager. This includes sharing personal contact details with children or families.
- They have a legal duty to protect the interests of children and accept the obligations inherent in that responsibility.
- It is important that all staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication, using professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.
- Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children to secure a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- All staff must inform the headteacher of any pre-existing (prior to the member of staff or child starting at the school) or new relationship with a child or close family member, which they feel might compromise the school or their own professional standing.

- Staff should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the school's ability to safeguard pupils.

It is an offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003) for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in **any f**orm of sexual activity with a child under the age of 18. Certain behaviours are at odds with a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. These include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or discrimination based on any characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010
- Loss of personal civility including, personal attacks or insults, displays of temper (such as throwing objects), unwanted physical contact (pushing, shoving, hitting) or the threat of the same.
- Staff must not swear, blaspheme or use offensive language in front of pupils, nor use language which is discriminatory and demeaning in any way.

Such behaviours are disciplinary offences and, in addition to action being taken under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure, may be referred to Local Authority and/or the police.

The Trust expects that all staff will:

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

It is not uncommon for students to become strongly attracted to members of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. When this is reported, the Senior Leadership Team will put actions into place in order to safeguard the members of staff and student. It should be noted that crushes can also occur between staff and staff. If a staff member feels uncomfortable about the behaviour of another member of staff, they should report this to a member of SLT.

The following refers to crushes involving students:

- Staff must report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a student may be infatuated with a member of staff to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff must always maintain professional boundaries and should not behave in a way which could suggest that they are encouraging infatuation.

26. Concerns and allegations against staff (including supply teachers, third-party & self-employed staff volunteers and contractors, and adults from organisations or individuals using the school premises)

If a member of staff is concerned about the behaviour of a person working or volunteering at the school (including contractors), they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'Allegations against adults', displayed in the school staff room/cloakrooms and contained within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Trust operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a

referral to LADO.

All concerns, no matter how small, will be recorded via the agreed form, shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately. This will serve our commitment to create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which the trust's values and expected behaviours as set out in this policy are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

'Low-level' concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- being overfriendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

We also encourage all staff to self-refer to their line manager or DSL where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

27. Abuse of power

As a result of the knowledge, position and/or authority invested in their role, all staff are in a position of trust in relation to all the students on roll. Staff maybe in a position of power with other staff, whether determined by their role, position, status or interactions.

Staff should understand that the relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which the adult has a position of power or influence.

They must always maintain appropriate professional boundaries in both schools and online.

They should recognise that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

Staff must not

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or to a student's or family's detriment.
- Use their position to gain access to staff information which is used to undermine a colleague.
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students or members of staff
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with students or staff which are of a sexual nature, or which become so.

28. Communication with children and parents, including social contact outside of the workplace

Staff must use their professional judgement when requesting or accepting any social contact (including through social media). This means that they must:

- not accept any request from pupils for contact via any social media platform.
- make a judgement about whether to maintain the connection in any cases where contacts were made before the child started at the school (e.g. teacher being friend with a parent). Staff must discuss any decision to maintain such contact with the headteacher.

  We acknowledge that staff may have friendships and social contact with parents of children outside of school. However, staff will not engage in conduct outside work that could damage their professional

reputation or the reputation of the school or trust community.

Any contact between staff and children and/or parents that is deemed to bring the school or trust into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions will always be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.

- Staff must not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature to any pupil (other than in the context of sex and relationship education in the PSHE curriculum), nor make any comments which trivialises alcohol or drug abuse.
- Occasionally, pupils may develop an infatuation for a member of staff. In such situations, the advice of the Head/Deputy Head *must* be sought. Staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is beyond reproach.
- Staff must inform the headteacher of any proposed or pre-existing arrangements between them and the families of children on roll that take place outside school e.g. baby-sitting, sports coaching, and music tuition.
- Staff are advised to wait until after an ex-pupil's 18th birthday before accepting any request on social media.

29. Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion

Staff must:

- declare any gift they receive form a parent or child. This does not include small tokens of appreciation such as at Christmas or the end of the year.
- not give gifts to individual children. Any rewards or treats will be given only as part of the school's agreed Behaviour policy.
- advise the Headteacher about the offer of any gift or hospitality, from outside or inside the school, which might be interpreted as an attempt to influence staff conduct towards children, parents or other employees.

30. Physical contact including intimate/personal care and behaviour management

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Any physical contact will be in response to the child's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, background and any agreed support or care plan.

The use of physical intervention including the use of reasonable force will always be in line with the following policies (Special Educational Needs Policy, Supporting children with medical conditions policy, Behaviour policy and Physical Intervention procedures.

Staff understand that:

- On a daily basis, it may be entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children and that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child's individual needs.
- Some children are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Whenever possible, adults seek the child's permission before initiating contact and are sensitive to any signs that the child may be uncomfortable *or* embarrassed.
- They have a responsibility to ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed child is age appropriate.

- They must never touch a child in a way which may represent a misuse of authority or considered indecent.
- Physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult.
- They should be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to the issues of gender.
- If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances will be immediately reported to the Headteacher/DSL and recorded in writing. If appropriate, the Headteacher will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations (LADO). Where an incident does meet this threshold, it will be recorded as a low level concern.
- Staff understand that a child who has suffered previous abuse or neglect may associate physical contact with such experiences. They recognise that such a child may seek out inappropriate physical contact and know to deter the child sensitively to help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- Staff know that they must never indulge in play that involves rough-and-tumble or fun fights.
- Children with disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements are understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Staff always allow/encourage children, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently.
- If a child's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, a robust risk assessment and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan is always put in place and reviewed regularly. In all cases where physical intervention takes place, staff record the incident and subsequent actions and report these in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

31. Showering and changing

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing, e.g. before and after PE; however, a level of supervision is required to ensure that pupils are safe, and that they are not subjected to bullying.

The supervision will be appropriate to the needs and ages of the pupils, and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

At primary level, where possible, female staff will supervise girls and male staff will supervise boys. At secondary level, only female staff will supervise girls and only male staff will supervise boys.

Staff will announce their intention of entering the changing room to allow pupils to maintain their privacy and will only remain in the changing room for as long as is necessary.

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

32. Physical contact with pupils

Schools understands that there are circumstances in which it is entirely necessary for staff to have physical contact with pupils, e.g. when applying first aid and assisting with intimate care, but staff will only do so in a professional and appropriate manner in line with relevant school policies.

When physical contact is made with pupils, it is imperative that it is conducted in a way which is responsive to the pupil's needs, is of limited duration and is appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff will seek the pupil's permission, where possible, before initiating contact. Staff will always use their professional judgement when determining what physical contact is appropriate, as this may differ between pupils. As such, the pupil's feelings and wishes will always be taken into account. Staff will never touch a pupil

in a way which is indecent and will always be prepared to explain their actions. Staff will be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described and, therefore, will be prepared to justify their actions.

Staff will not engage in rough play, tickling or play fights with pupils.

Extra caution will be taken where it is known that a pupil has previously suffered from abuse or neglect.

Physical contact will never be secretive; if a member of staff believes an action could be misinterpreted, this will be reported to the headteacher and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Where it is necessary in PE classes for teachers to demonstrate use of equipment, this will be conducted with another member of staff if possible. If a pupil is required to participate, their consent will be given before doing so.

If a child is in distress and in need of comfort as reassurance, staff may use age-appropriate physical contact, such as placing their hand on the pupil's shoulder. Staff will remain self-aware of their actions at all times and ensure that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff may also use reasonable force as a means of physical contact with pupils for restraint purposes, such instances will always be in accordance with the DFE's guidance on the use of reasonable force.

33. First aid

Staff will always adhere to the School's Health and Safety Policy, the policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions and for administering first aid or medication.

34. One-to-one situations

Staff carefully consider the welfare needs of children when with them in a one to one situation. All spaces in the school are set up to allow any activity to be easily observed by other staff in the school. Windows and doors are kept clear from display materials to allow rooms to be overlooked. Internal doors remain open when practicable. Staff should not use signs such as 'engaged' or 'do not enter' on doors of offices or similar spaces.
See your School lone working procedures.

Children are provided with age/developmentally appropriate advice about managing distressing feelings that may arise during 1-1 situations in school. Staff will record any time a child has appeared upset/angry during a 1-1 session and will report this to their line manager.

Staff working in one-to-one situations with students can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints. It is always important to consider the needs and circumstances of the student involved.

For staff to protect themselves they should:

- Only work one to one with a child where it is absolutely necessary and with the knowledge and consent of senior leaders and parents/carers.
- Be aware of relevant risk assessments, policies and procedures.
- Always report any situation where a student becomes distressed, anxious or angry.

35. Online and virtual teaching

Online and virtual teaching have grown significantly over recent years and the detailed requirements are in the Remote Learning Policy for each school. In the event that a further period of remote / online learning is necessary, staff must:

- Adhere to the Remote Learning Policy.
- Be fully dressed.
- Ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that an online lesson / meeting is taking place and for what purpose.
- Avoid one to one situations – request that a parent is in the room for the duration or ask a colleague or member of SLT to join the session.
- Only record a lesson or online meeting with a pupil where this has been agreed with the headteacher or other senior staff, and the pupil and their parent / carer have given explicit written (email) consent to do so.
- Be able to justify images of pupils in their possession.

Staff should not:

- Contact pupils outside the operating times defined by senior leaders.
- Take or record images of pupils for their personal use.
- Record virtual lessons or meetings using personal equipment (unless agreed and risk assessed by senior staff).
- Engage online while children are in a state of undress or semi-undress.

36. Home visits and transporting children

When it is necessary to transport pupils off-site, staff will ensure that the transport arrangements of the vehicle meet all legal requirements, they have an appropriate licence and the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is insured.

Staff will gain consent from parents before transporting pupils and will be aware that the welfare of all pupils in the vehicle is their responsibility.

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

In the case of an emergency, the headteacher, DSL or DDSL may give permission for a member of staff or nominated parent to transport a child where it is considered this is in the child's interests. Every effort will be made to seek permission from a parent or appropriate family member and a record will be kept.

Whilst most work is completed in the school setting, there may be occasions in response to an urgent, planned or specific situation where it is necessary to make one-off or regular home visits. Two or more staff will be present for a home visit to avoid any discrepancy regarding safeguarding concerns.

Staff should:

- Agree the purpose for any home visit with a member of SLT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Have a clear understanding of the actions that should be taken if it is believed that a child or parent is at immediate risk of harm, including when to contact emergency services and/or partner agencies.
- Ensure that all passengers wear seatbelts
- Where necessary, ensure that booster seats are used and that these meet the current legislative requirements
- Except in an emergency, never enter a home without the parent or carer’s consent or when the parent is absent.
- Adhere to any risk management strategies.

- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.
- Always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure.

37. Educational Visits and After-School Activities

Staff remain in a position of trust during school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours and so, they will ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Organisers will conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety guidelines. Staff/child ratios will be specified and where overnight stays are involved, and the composition of groups of children and the supervising staff will be carefully planned to keep all children and staff safe.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration will be given to sleeping arrangements as part of the planning process. Children, staff and parents will be informed of these arrangements prior to the start of the trip and any proposed changes to the plans will be agreed with senior staff at the school in advance. Staff will not smoke or consume alcohol on any school trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues aware of their whereabouts, during an out-of-school activity. This means staff will always have another adult present in out-of-school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff.

38. Attendance

The school expects that staff members will:

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

39. Staff appearance and dress (also applies to online and virtual teaching)

Staff should remember that they are role models for pupils, and that their dress and appearance should reflect this. Staff should dress smartly, in clothing appropriate to the role, compliant with professional standards and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. It should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding to pupils, parents, colleagues or other stakeholders. Political slogans must be avoided.

Any staff with tattoos that might be viewed as offensive, provocative or likely to give rise to misunderstanding must ensure those tattoos always remain covered when that adult is working for the school. All piercings to be subtle in appearance.

All schools will make reasonable adjustments to uniform and dress expectations to suit disabilities, medical conditions, and religious and cultural beliefs.

40. The acceptable use of technologies

Staff will adhere to the procedures outlined in the EQUA Mead's Online Safety Policy and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement at all times.

Staff will be aware of how the use of technology can impact safeguarding and wellbeing issues, e.g. online abuse. Staff will be vigilant to ensure their own behaviour is respectful and that pupils are using technology appropriately while under their care.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school community or Trust into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profile they may have.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social networking sites including contacting pupils or their family members, accepting or inviting friend requests from pupils or their family members, or following pupils or their family members on social media. EQUA Mead schools understand that some staff members are also parents of pupils at the school and, therefore, may wish to contact other parents. When doing so, staff will exercise their professional judgement and will not contact family members on social media if this leads to a conflict of interest.

Staff must be circumspect in their use of **all** social media or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or by association with websites/pages or posts established by others (e.g. 'liking', reposting or forwarding). This includes the use of dating websites where staff could encounter parents or students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

They must consider the long-term implications of any content published by them online, specifically how it might ever have an adverse effect:

- on their reputation as an individual working in an education setting
- their ability to maintain good professional boundaries with parents and with children
- on the reputation of the school or trust.

Staff must not access any content from the internet on a personal device during school hours on the school site, or on a school computer or device at any time that could bring the school into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions

All staff are aware of their part in ensuring the DFE Filtering and monitoring standards and cyber security standards are upheld. If staff become aware of misuse by another member of staff (in or out of school), they must report those concerns using the concerns and allegations against staff (including supply teachers, third-party & self-employed staff, volunteers, contractors) procedures. These procedures now include adults from organisations or individuals using school premises procedures.

41. Premises, equipment and communication

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

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

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

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

Communication systems may be accessed when the school suspects that the employee has been misusing systems or facilities, or for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity. Access will be secured by the systems manager, only with the permission of the governing board.

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

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

42. Exceptional operating circumstances

If the school is required to change the way we offer our provision to children due to exceptional circumstances e.g. during a pandemic lockdown, staff safeguarding responsibilities to children will continue to apply, in line with the safeguarding policy. The DSL will ensure staff, children, and families are provided with:

- written information regarding temporary changes to procedures for working with children e.g. online.
- timescales for such changes so that all children, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those previously in place.

43. Photography and recording

Phones are kept in the designated areas as agreed within each setting. Any pictures taken of children by the school will be in accordance to the school's agreed procedures for the management of mobile phones and cameras. Staff will not:

- take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse)
- make audio recordings of a child's disclosure.

Photographs and videos will only be taken using school equipment – using personal mobile phones for this purpose is prohibited, in accordance with the school's photography policy/procedure.

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

44. Declaration of interests

Staff members are required to declare their interests, both personal and financial, where the group or organisation they are affiliated with could be considered to be in conflict with the ethos of the school.

For the purposes of this policy, a financial conflict of interest is one where there is, or appears to be, opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain for close relatives or friends, or where it may be reasonable for a third party to take the view that financial benefits may affect an individual's actions.

The term 'financial interest' means anything of monetary value, including the following:

- Payments for services

- Equity interests
- Intellectual property rights
- Hospitality or gifts

Examples of financial interests that must be declared include, but are not limited to, equity interests in services considered for use by the school.

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

Examples of situations that could give rise to non-financial conflicts of interest include the following:

- Pressure or temptation to accept gifts, inducements or hospitality
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the individual has a close personal relationship
- Where a member of staff has or develops a close personal relationship with a colleague

Membership of a trade union or staff representative group does not need to be declared.

Staff members will also carefully consider whether they need to declare their relationship with any individual where this might cause a conflict with school activities.

Failure to make a relevant declaration of interests is a serious breach of trust and, therefore, if employees are in doubt about a declaration, they are advised to contact the school or trade union.

All declarations, including nil returns, will be submitted in writing to the headteacher for inclusion on the Register of Business Interests.

45. Financial inducements

Staff members will:

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

If there are concerns relating to the improper conduct of any member of staff, these should be addressed, in the first instance, through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

46. Health and safety

Staff members will:

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

47. Smoking, alcohol and other substances

Staff will not smoke or vape on the school premises. *(Schools may wish to add a distance from school e.g. Staff will not smoke or vape within a 200 metre distance from the school premises).*

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

The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff members must never attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Staff must not consume alcohol or take illegal drugs on school trips and residential visits.

If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member's performance, the school has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures, including referral to the police.

48. Professional behaviour and conduct

Staff members are expected to treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.

The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated. Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated.

Staff members will not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience, or bring the school into disrepute.

Staff members will inform the headteacher if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.

Staff will be aware that professional behaviour and conduct is expected to be extended to extra-curricular trips and visits. Staff attending a trip or visit will act in accordance with this Code of conduct.

Staff will act appropriately in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of school resources at all times and will not use school resources for party political purposes.

49. Conduct outside of work

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school. The nature of the work cannot be seen to bring the school into disrepute, nor be at a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Staff will not engage in outside work or activities which could seriously damage the reputation and standing

of the school, the employee's own reputation, or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs, or sexual misconduct are unacceptable.

Staff will not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer, into disrepute. This is explored further in the Acceptable use of technology section of this policy.

Some staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of students independent of the professional relationship. These staff should also be aware that this is one way that some people choose to 'groom' – 'grooming' the adult to gain access to a child.

Staff must advise the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any regular social contact they have with a student which could give rise to a concern and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if the relationship with a parent extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship.

Staff must Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. babysitting, tutoring.

Generally, staff should not invite any students into their living accommodation unless the reason for doing so has been firmly established and agreed with their manager and the student's parents or carers. Staff should not ask students to undertake jobs or errands for their personal benefit e.g. gardening.

There will be situations where staff have children in their school, and therefore the child's friends visit the home. Staff are to be mindful of the need to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.

Probity of records

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

Whistleblowing

51. All staff and volunteers are expected and encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school safeguarding regime. All staff within the Trust who wish to raise an issue relating to the organisation with someone in confidence can use the following procedures:

- In the first instance, raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with the Headteacher/ DSL/DDSL.
- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the Headteacher or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:
    - The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk if they think the concern will not be dealt with properly or may be covered up or if they raised a concern internally but it has not been acted upon or if they are worried they are being treated unfairly.
    - Staff members can also access guidance at www.gov.uk/whistleblowing. Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

If the concern is regarding the headteacher, staff should report this to the CEO directly.

Contacts

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

Training

53. All members of staff and volunteers will read and sign to confirm they understand this Policy.

54. All staff will participate in the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which will include online safety. Additionally, staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually. This will usually be provided through their TES Develop account to ensure all staff records are up to date. However, should this be delivered on a face to face basis staff are then responsible for ensuring that they have both signed in to the training session and subsequently updated their own learning record on TES Develop.

55. The welfare of all children is of paramount importance. All staff, including volunteers, are informed of this policy at induction and given the chance to question and discuss the expectations set out.

56. Work in schools is both rewarding and demanding. We support staff by prioritising time to discuss the challenges of their role linked to any aspect of this Staff Behaviour Policy with their line manager and seek further support as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

57. This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.