

Code of Conduct and Dress Code

Policy Code:	HR29
Policy Start Date:	July 2025
Policy Review Date:	July 2026

Please read this Code of Conduct and Dress Code in conjunction with all Trust policies, which can be found on the Trust website.

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Each setting within The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (the Trust) works towards a shared vision and ethos, and achieves its outcomes in a way which is most appropriate to the needs of the individual academy and the context it serves. The Trust also has an overarching ethos that is articulated through a Motto; a Mission; and a set of Values. There is, therefore, an open, conscious and emotional 'buy-in' to the Trust from its academies. The Trust's expectation is that all staff support 'The Priory Ethos', details of which can be found on the Trust's website.
- 1.2 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as the Early Years setting at the Priory Witham Academy, Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire ITT.
- 1.3 The Trust's Code of Conduct is applicable to all staff including volunteers, trainee teachers, work experience, agency staff and consultants who work onsite.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 The Pay, Performance and HR Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Head of HR.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
- 2.3 When starting a post or engagement with the Trust, an individual must agree to adhere to our Code of Conduct, a copy of which is issued to all members of staff and volunteers for signature. This must be reviewed by all, on an annual basis, during the September Safeguarding and Compliance checks (or before the start date or on arrival for those who join the Trust mid-year). This is the Trust's expectation of how staff and volunteers conduct themselves (both in and out of the workplace), including the way in which they present themselves whilst in work. Staff are expected to conduct themselves at all times in such a way that no discredit could be brought upon the Trust. It is important that staff familiarise themselves with the expectations and where there is doubt, speak to the Head of Academy/Service Lead for clarification. Failure to comply with the standards could lead to disciplinary action in line with the Trust's HR12 Staff Disciplinary Policy.

3 Aims

- 3.1 To set and maintain standards of conduct that is expected of adults working with/for the Trust.
- 3.2 To ensure a culture of safety and respect.

4 Expectations

4.1 It is expected that all staff:

- a) have read and understood all Trust policies, and adhere to and accept these policies, copies of which are available on the Trust's website;
- b) support all pupils and learners to achieve their full potential. We strive to inspire young people and to enhance and enrich pupils' lives, enabling them to experience as wide and as full a range of learning opportunities as possible and to improve the life chances of our pupils so they become true citizens of the world. It is assumed that staff will use their expertise and enthusiasm for the benefit of our pupils and learners;
- c) are helpful, polite and courteous whilst representing the Trust, including with visitors, parents/carers, colleagues, pupils and learners;
- d) differentiate between the unacceptable actions of the pupil and learner and the pupil and learner themselves. The action should be condemned, not the individual. Staff should never humiliate a pupil or learner, either privately or publicly. Sarcasm should not be used and, where practicable, pupil or learner issues should be dealt with away from a collective group in line with the Trust's safeguarding training. Overly familiar or inappropriate language should not be used;
- e) should be referred to in a professional manner at all times, using their preferred honorific title and personal pronouns (or using their preferred title and surname). Staff in Early Years Foundation Stage and at Willoughby Academy can choose to be referred to by their first name;
- f) are aware of their conduct outside of school and of the responsibility to maintain the integrity and the good name of themselves and the Trust. Staff are often recognised by both pupils, learners and parents/carers. They should be conscious of maintaining an appropriate level of professionalism at all times. As detailed in the Trust Safeguarding Training, staff are particularly reminded that overly familiar and personal relationships with pupils/learners (under the age of 18) are not permitted and sexual activity with a pupil is forbidden by law, no matter what the age of the pupil;
- g) should be conversant with the Terms and Conditions of Employment or engagement. A contract is signed by all members of staff and individuals are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the specific requirements of their post. If in doubt, clarification should be sought from the line manager or a member of the HR team;
- h) should declare any personal relationship with a colleague that may give rise to a conflict of interest. The Trust understands a member of staff's right to a private life and understands that personal relationships may form with colleagues or contractors. However, the member of staff has a responsibility to declare any personal relationships or conduct as this may give rise to a conflict of interest or breach of confidentiality;

- i) related to, or who are the parents/carers of a pupil and/or learner, are expected to separate their familial and employment role. Staff must not show or provide preferential treatment to them or become involved in their education or care beyond their specific role as a member of staff/volunteer or their role as a parent/carer/relation;
- j) carry out duties and responsibilities at all times with honesty and integrity. Positions of authority should never be used for personal gain. Staff must declare if they have any interest or connection with any business or organisation that supplies/provides a service to the Trust. Declaration of Business Interest forms are available from the Clerk to the Trustees and the Clerks to the Governors;
- k) will make the Head of Academy/Service Lead aware if they have any personal links to existing pupils, e.g., family members, friendship with a pupil and/or learner from having previously been at school with them. Permission must be sought from the Head of Academy/Service Lead for continued contact;
- l) will make the Head of Academy/Service Lead aware if they hold a Governor/Trustee/Parent Teacher Association or equivalent position with another educational establishment;
- m) treat all Trust equipment/property with due care and respect. Damage should always be reported immediately to the member of staff's line manager;
- n) seek permission from the Head of Academy/Service Lead to undertake additional employment. The Trust expects all staff to fulfil their obligations to our pupils and learners, and reserves the right to make a judgement as to whether undertaking additional work would be prejudicial to that outcome, or bring The Trust into disrepute. A discussion with the Head of Academy/Service Lead should always precede the application for additional employment. If, during recruitment, a candidate already holds a further post, or volunteers as a Governor/Trustee/Parent Teacher Association or equivalent at another educational establishment, this should be declared at the interview;
- o) inform the Head of Academy/Service Lead, in advance, of a decision to apply for a post elsewhere. As the Academy or Trust will generally be asked to provide a reference, it is both courteous and sensible for the application to have been discussed with the Head of Academy/Service Lead. Staff who have attended an interview are asked to inform the Head of Academy/Service Lead of the outcome on their return to work;
- p) notify the Head of Academy/Service Lead or the Head of Human Resources of any criminal investigation (inclusive of voluntary questioning), any behaviour that could indicate that you may not be suitable to work with children, or any caution or conviction immediately whilst in the employment of the Trust. A decision as to whether there has been a breach of any Trust policy will be made. The Trust acknowledges that a member of staff charged with an offence is innocent until proven guilty. However, special considerations will apply if the offence is included on the list of offences relevant to safeguarding or if the individual is imprisoned on remand pending trial. In such cases, consideration may be given as to whether dismissal may be appropriate. Each case will be considered independently;

- q) adhere to, and accept, the Trust's HR5 ICT Acceptable Use Policy, ICT2 Online Safety (Staff) Policy and HR22 Social Media Policy. Social networking sites and blogging are extremely popular. Staff must not post material which could damage the reputation of the Trust or cause concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Those who post material that could be considered as inappropriate or who indicate their agreement with such material posted by others, could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations of misconduct;
- r) will not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work and will at all times perform their duties in an objective manner. Individuals must remain politically impartial and are prohibited from promoting partisan political views through their work;
- s) adhere to the Trust's HS1 No Smoking and Vaping Policy;
- t) ensure that they wear their ID Badge and designated lanyard around their neck at all times whilst on Trust premises, for both identity and safeguarding purposes. Staff must not loan their ID badge and/or lanyard to anyone else at any time. Staff ID badges and lanyards should never be given to pupils or learners to provide access or printing;
- u) maintain private and confidential information and ensure that they adhere to the Trust's HR6 Data Protection Policy, the Trust's HR33 Record Management Policy and the Trust's HR6a Data Breach Policy. Staff must adhere to the Data Protection guidance given to them at Induction and/or through training and must not share pupil, parent/carer and/or staff data with a third party without permission from the Trust's Data Protection Officer. This includes sharing personal data and pupil and staff work with artificial intelligence (AI) enabled systems;
- v) declare any gifts in line with correct procedures as outlined in the Trust's Finance Manual and the Trust's F2 Policy for Gifts, Hospitality, Awards, Prizes and other benefits;
- w) will adhere to the section entitled 'Taking photographs/videos of children and young people' in the Trust's SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff will not use devices (e.g., phones/tablets/smart watches) for personal use during lessons or whilst supervising children and should not make or receive personal calls at any time that they are supervising pupils, unless in an emergency situation. Content stored on devices brought into the academy must be appropriate and it is strongly recommended that devices are password protected. Staff are not allowed to wear a smart watch or equivalent device when delivering intimate care and any device (work or personal) will not be taken into the room/area where intimate care is taking place;
- x) will not give out their personal contact details to pupils, learners and/or parents/carers and will only use professional communication methods, e.g., work email. Where communication is required, staff must not show or provide preferential treatment to pupils or become involved in their education or care beyond their specific and/or directed role as a member of staff/volunteer, and professional boundaries must be maintained at all times. In the event that staff have any concerns about a pupil, they should report these in line with their setting's safeguarding procedures;

- y) ensure that the consumption of alcohol 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 tolerate staff or volunteers arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or who are consuming alcohol or illegal drugs whilst at work, this includes educational visits. At the Head of Academy/Service Lead's discretion, staff may be permitted to have an alcoholic beverage at an after-school celebration event when the working with, and supervision of, children is not taking place. In these circumstances the Trust would still expect staff to behave in an appropriate manner to avoid bringing the reputation of the Trust into disrepute;
- z) seek medical advice if they are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, particularly if they work with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Staff working in the EYFS must only work directly with children if the medical advice received confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly. Staff should speak with their Line Manager if they have any questions and/or concerns;
- aa) will not deal directly with the press or media unless required to do so as part of their duties, or alternatively have been given express authority to do so by the Head of Academy/Service Lead, Communications Manager or CEO; and
- bb) staff, volunteers and visitors are reminded that the Trust does not accept responsibility for personal property. Staff, volunteers and visitors are strongly advised not to bring expensive items or items of personal value onto any of the Trust sites. Similar consideration should also be given to any items taken on off-site visits.

5 Job Descriptions and Professional Standards

- 5.1 All staff are expected to carry out duties as outlined in their job description, as well as any other duties deemed suitable to their role.
- 5.2 All teaching staff are expected to carry out the professional duties of a teacher as outlined in the School Teachers' Standards and School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (latest version).

6 Equality Act 2010

- 6.1 The Equality Act of 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone under the nine protected characteristics: race, sex, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, age, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. The Trust supports the Act's principles and is committed to creating an inclusive work environment where equal opportunities and non-discrimination are supported for all. As outlined in the Trust's HR8A Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy for Staff, we believe the diversity of staff adds to the strength of our Trust.

7 Copyright

- 7.1 All records, documents, ICT solutions and other papers that staff compile or acquire in their role, which are related to the work of the Trust, are the intellectual property of the Trust.

8 Dress Code

- 8.1 The Priory Federation of Academies Trust provides a professional working environment. We therefore expect staff to wear clothing appropriate to that environment. This includes all staff employed by any of the Trust sites. Some staff, depending upon their role, may be supplied with a uniform by their academy.
- 8.2 It is a condition of employment that all staff comply with the Trust's Dress Code. Accordingly, all staff are expected to dress in a professional business-like manner appropriate to their role. Clothing needs to reflect the professional environment in which we work and maintain high standards of modesty, to be decided at the discretion of the Trust. Staff need to be mindful that, although there is a difference in circumstances, pupils will always compare what staff are wearing with what they are prohibited from wearing. Staff need to be aware that they are regarded as role models and consistent standards of professional attire help set a purposeful and business-like manner. A useful comparator is the standard and type of dress commonly worn in an educational/ professional formal office environment.
- 8.3 Evidence shows that visual stimuli and non-verbal signals that are read by looking at human faces are an important part of the way children/pupils learn to communicate. Therefore, staff who have regular contact with pupils should avoid any item of clothing which obscures either wholly or partially their face. This may include religious clothing, e.g., the niqab and/or burqa. Should staff have any further questions relating to the wearing of religious clothing, they should speak to the Head of HR.
- 8.4 The Trust's Dress Code applies on all occasions when staff are working (unless otherwise advised by the Head of Academy/Service Lead), and when pupils are on site. For some formal occasions, such as prize-giving, staff may be required to wear formal academic dress, for example, gowns, which are provided by the Trust.
- 8.5 Staff should be aware of the following:
- smart suits or separate jacket/trouser/skirt/dress combinations are standard, with skirts/dresses not being immodestly short, this will be decided at the discretion of the Trust. A male suit should be worn with a collared shirt and tie. In some contexts, due to the age and need of the children, the above may be adapted to meet the needs of learners and staff, as agreed/directed by the Trust;
 - jackets should be available to be worn at all times, dependent upon the climate and environment in which you are working; cardigans are permitted but are not a substitute for jackets;
 - footwear should be smart and formal - toes and heels must be covered and fashion trainers are not permitted, for example, Converse-style trainers;
 - care and precaution should also be taken when using machinery with any item of clothing;

- staff working from home should wear appropriate professional clothing whilst on video calls;
- staff involved in the teaching of practical or sporting subjects - for example Drama and PE - are expected to wear suitable clothing or protective wear. However, they are expected to change into business attire where and when appropriate;
- on CCF and ACF parade and field days, Officers and SSI should wear their respective uniforms correctly (berets and hats should not be worn during the academy day);
- staff hairstyles and colour should be in accordance with smart business dress. Hair colour should be a natural colour only;
- jewellery, if worn, should be worn in accordance with smart business dress; and
- staff ID badges and lanyards issued by the Trust should be worn (visibly around the neck) on all Trust premises at all times.

8.6 The following are not appropriate forms of dress or appearance:

- leisure or sportswear, including sports footwear (except for PE or sports events);
- denim wear;
- leggings worn in place of trousers;
- shorts;
- visible body piercings (other than discreet (small) and moderate sized earrings and/or a discreet (small) flat, plain nose stud);
- vest tops, sports t-shirts or low-cut tops;
- clothing with a large logo or slogan;
- clothing that is sheer, unless styled with appropriate layering;
- hats (unless staff are working outdoors);
- footless tights; and/or
- sandals/flip flops/open-backed shoes, e.g., slingbacks.

8.7 As part of a professional dress code, whilst visible tattoos are not encouraged, in instances where they are not covered by clothing they must not be offensive or inappropriate, for example, containing offensive language, hate symbols or nudity. Staff with tattoos on areas such as the face, neck and/or hands may be required to cover them. The Trust reserves the right to assess the suitability of any tattoo and request its covering if deemed necessary.

8.8 Staff regularly undertaking moving and handling and/or physiotherapy of pupils as part of their role should be mindful of health and safety, and take care to ensure that their clothing and/or accessories are not likely to cause injury, either to themselves or the pupil. For example, long jewellery which could get caught/tangled. Nails should be an appropriate length, rounded and only gel additions (no acrylics);

8.9 This code is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff must use common sense, adhering to the principles underpinning this document. Where staff are unsure, they should speak with their Head of Academy/Service Lead.

8.9 Staff considered to be in breach of the Dress Code will be advised by their Line Manager. Disagreements over the appropriateness of specific items of clothing or footwear will be

referred to the Head of Academy or the Head of HR (as appropriate), who will be the final arbiter on such matters.

- 8.10 Persistent failure to comply with this dress code could result in disciplinary action, in line with the Trust's HR12 Staff Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.11 It is impossible to itemise all permitted and non-permitted items; however, in working for the Trust you are accepting that the Trust's decision on what constitutes acceptable appearance is final and binding and will be decided on an individual case-by-case basis.

9 Policy Change

- 9.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.

The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Code of Conduct

This Policy has been approved by the Pay, Performance and HR Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.