



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST

Faith Inspired Education

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

Our values and ethos are at the heart of everything we do. All staff are expected to embrace, support, and uphold these values, as detailed in the Staff Handbook. Specific guidelines on etiquette and conduct within the Gurdwara can be found in the Sikh Ethos Handbook. In turn, staff are expected to act in the best interests of the school and its community at all times.

1. Teachers as employees

We are responsible:

- We take responsibility for our own aspect of the school and its improvement.
- We define problems and look for a possible solution: we don't moan.
- In the face of difficulty, we remember that we are part of a team and ask for support.
- We give ourselves time to listen and think.

We are respectful:

- We model respectful relationships with one another.
- We greet each other.
- We are honest: we don't say one thing and think another.
- We make agreements that we intend to, and are able to, keep.
- We presume honourable motives: we remember that in the school context, decisions are made in the best interests of the students.
- In conflict, we talk directly and privately to the person we have a problem with: we don't gossip and spread our issues.

We are confident:

- We are confident in our own abilities as education professionals.
- We praise each other and share our successes.
- We forgive and let go.

2. Teaching – a skilled and trusted profession

All staff will:

- Put the progress, wellbeing and development of students first.
- Take responsibility for continuously improving the quality of their teaching practice.
- Help students to become confident and successful learners.
- Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality.
- Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers.
- Work as part of a school team.
- Cooperate with other professional colleagues.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

3. Putting the wellbeing, development and progress of students first

All staff will:

- Ensure that they follow the guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Use their professional expertise and judgement to do the best for students in their care.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students.
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with students, particularly with regard to physical contact, and social media or other contact outside of school.
- Demonstrate self-awareness and take responsibility for accessing help and support in order to ensure that their own practice does not have a negative impact on learning or progress or put students at risk or harm.
- Use appropriate channels to raise concerns about the practice of other teachers or professionals if this has a negative impact on learning or progress.

4. Taking responsibility for maintaining the quality of own teaching practice

All staff will:

- Meet the professional standards for teaching relevant to their role and the stage they have reached in their career.
- Develop their practice within the framework of the school's curriculum.
- Base their practice on knowledge of their subject area(s) and specialisms and school pedagogy about teaching and learning.
- Make use of assessment techniques, set appropriate and clear learning objectives, plan activities and employ a range of teaching methodologies and technologies to meet individual and group learning needs.
- Reflect on their practice and use feedback from colleagues to help them recognise their own development needs; actively seek out opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and practice.

5. Helping students to become confident and successful learners

All staff will:

- Uphold students' rights and help them to understand their responsibilities.
- Listen to students, consider their views and preferences, including challenging them in decisions that affect them, including those related to their own learning.
- Have high expectations of all students, whatever their background and aptitudes, and challenge and support them all.
- Promote students' confidence and self-awareness by clarifying how assessment will be used to support improvement, providing clear and specific feedback, and celebrating their success.
- Communicate clear expectations about student behaviour to ensure disruption to learning is minimised and students feel safe and secure.
- Help students prepare for the future by engaging them with the implications of changes in society and technology and offering them impartial advice and guidance about careers and their future options.

6. Demonstrating respect for diversity and promote equality

All staff will:

- Act appropriately towards all students and people, parents and colleagues, whatever their socioeconomic background, age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief.
- Take responsibility for understanding and complying with school / Trust policies relating to equality of opportunity, inclusion and bullying.
- Address unlawful discrimination, bullying, and stereotyping no matter who is the victim or the perpetrator through school/ Trust processes.
- Help create a fair and inclusive environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.
- Help students to understand different views, perspectives, and experiences and develop positive relationships.
- Support the understanding and enacting of British Values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

7. Striving to establish productive relationships with parents and carers

All staff will:

- Provide parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress.
- Involve parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education
- Consider parents' and carers' views and perspectives, including those that relate to their child's development.
- Follow the policies and procedures on communication with parents and carers, including those that relate to sensitive areas such as attendance and exclusion.

8. Working as part of a team

All staff will:

- Endeavour to develop productive and supportive relationships with all colleagues.
- Exercise leadership and management responsibilities in a respectful, inclusive and fair way, and in accordance with contractual obligations and national standards.
- Uphold policies and procedures and raise any concerns about the running of the school in a responsible and appropriate way.
- Contribute to colleagues' learning and development; provide honest, accurate, and justifiable comments when giving references for, or assessing the performance of, colleagues.
- Participate in continuing professional development and other activities.

9. Expected behaviours when dealing with other professionals or Line Managers

All staff will:

- Seek to understand the roles of other professional colleagues.
- Communicate and establish productive working relationships with other professional colleagues.
- Ensure that they are clear about their own professional contribution to joint working, seeking clarification where this is needed.

- Understand that in sharing responsibility for students' wellbeing and development, staff should always act within their own competence and responsibilities.
- If there are any issues, staff are required to speak to their Line Manager in the first instance (not to anyone else).
- Staff are expected to manage their own emotions as adults.
- Staff are in a position of responsibility and are expected to work through to resolve issues.
- Staff are expected to accept the Line Manager's authority.
- Staff are expected to actively support the school/SAT, its systems and procedures.

10. Demonstrating honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the school

All staff will:

- Exercise their responsibilities in relation to the examination and assessment of achievement and attainment.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including in the use of school property and finance.
- Understand that their duty to safeguard students comes first, but otherwise acknowledge the rights of students, families, and colleagues to confidentiality, in line with statutory requirements and school's policies.
- Represent their professional status accurately and avoid taking advantage of their professional position.
- Maintain high standards in their behaviour and appearance, maintain an effective learning environment and uphold public trust and confidence in the profession.

11. Staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role

All staff will:

- Ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake.
- Wear clothing which is appropriate to being a professional and role model.
- Wear clothing which is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative.
- Wear clothing which does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Wear clothing which is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- Wear clothing which is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.

12. Duty of political neutrality

- Staff have a duty to be politically neutral and ensure that there is a balanced presentation of opposing views in the curriculum.
- Staff must not allow their own political opinions to interfere with their work or influence students.
- Staff must not display or distribute political materials or act politically on school premises.
- Where political views are brought to the attention of pupils within the school or during extracurricular activities they must be in the form of a balanced presentation of opposing views and be relevant to the subject being taught.

13. Staff actions (See also Teachers' Standards in Appraisal document)

- Students are not allowed to drink or eat in the corridor or classrooms.

- Briefings for staff are formal meetings and must be treated as such.
- Staff workspace or classroom is a reflection of their professionalism; staff are required to ensure that these are kept tidy and safe. If displays are used staff are asked to ensure that they are of a high quality, up to date and show high standards of students' work.
- Staff absences are monitored and recorded on a daily basis. The Absence Policy applies to all staff.
- Staff lateness is monitored, and staff must be punctual at the beginning of the day and to lessons.
- **Teaching is your first priority; lateness to lessons is not acceptable.**
- Lessons are expected to start on time and staff should be ready in their classrooms. Staff are required to make their way to the classroom before the lesson starts.
- For safeguarding purposes, staff are required to make sure that they are with their assigned classes as on their SIMS timetable and in their designated room. Any requests for changes must be agreed with the SLT Line Manager.
- Missing deadlines, such as deadlines for reports and tracking, is not acceptable.
- Staff have a duty to work within the ICT and data protection policies; this includes not allowing students to use the member of staff's laptop or giving pupils your own login details. Personal information and SIMS registers should not be visible to students.
- Staff PCs/laptops should be locked when left unattended.
- Staff must not give keys or passes to pupils.
- Pupils should remain in their classrooms for the duration of the lesson. If a pupil needs to leave for any reason (e.g. illness), they should do so with the staff On Call.
- Staff must not send pupils to the staffroom/workroom or reprographics to collect printing and/or photocopying.
- Staff should not be on their mobile phone during lessons
- Staff must use school issued laptops and equipment strictly for professional and educational purposes. Misuse of school laptops for excessive or inappropriate personal use is prohibited.

14. **Staff's professional boundaries with students and other staff**

All of the behaviours in this section are considered to be (gross) misconduct and will lead to disciplinary procedures.

- Staff are required to ensure that they maintain a professional boundary at all times. If the adult-student relationship is breached, it will be dealt with seriously.
- Staff are expected to respect physical boundaries and should not invade a student's personal space unless it is for safeguarding reasons.
- Overly friendly conversations with a pupil or groups of pupils are considered to be professional (gross) misconduct.
- Inappropriate over-sharing of information with students about other members of staff, other students or the school is considered to be (gross) misconduct.
- Confidential conversations carried out in public spaces (such as the staffroom/workroom, corridors, pupil office, in front of others on or off the premises) are similarly considered to be professional (gross) misconduct.
- Criticising or gossiping about other members of staff, students or parents is unprofessional and considered to be (gross) misconduct.

15. Examples of staff conduct which undermines the school systems

- Moving classes without permission.
- Not using the correct channels of communication (i.e., not addressing matters through their Line Manager).
- Sending students to the toilets during lesson time particularly during p1, p3 and p5 (PSA).
- Not challenging inappropriate behaviour in the corridors.
- Allowing students out of lessons or to roam freely out of supervised areas.
- Calling students back during lunchtime or non-lesson times for social gatherings
- Dismissing students before the end of the lesson..
- Sending students to the staffroom/workroom or photocopying room to pick up printing.
- Inviting or allowing students into the staffroom/workroom.
- Not adhering to the Feedback and Assessment Policy.
- Not adhering to the Homework Policy.

16. Terms and Conditions relating to hours of work

- Teachers are considered to be full time employees and must not engage in other paid work unless permission has been sought in writing and agreed by the Executive Headteacher. This includes any other work including private tuition, examining for Exam Boards, etc.

17. Social Networking

- Staff are expected to read and understand the Social Networking Policy (see appendix 1). It is crucial that they manage their online reputation.
- Staff's professional reputation is an essential part of their current and future career. KCSIE 2026 expects employers to carry out checks on staff's online presence, this includes shortlisted candidates as part of safer recruitment due diligence.
- If any staff member(s) place an inappropriate post or image in the public domain which lowers the reputation of the school, a staff member or a pupil, disciplinary action will be taken. It is good practice to follow the practice of never mentioning work, your opinions of your colleagues or processes on your own private Social Media Networks.
- You must be aware that posting information about the school cannot be isolated from your working life. Any information published online can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see.

18. Data Protection

- The school collects, stores, processes and retains data relating to their educational functions. Lots of this data is personal, and the schools takes its obligation with regards to data protection with the utmost seriousness.
- All staff are expected to abide by the Data Protection Policy and breach of this policy is a serious disciplinary matter.
- All staff must ensure all personal data relating to pupils, staff and other stakeholders is processed in line with the Data Protection Policy. Further details can be found in relevant sections of the Staff Handbook.

19. References

- A referee is required to give a reference that is accurate and honest.
- Your future employers will normally expect your Headteacher to be one of your referees.

Appendix 1 - Social Media Guidelines

1.1 Why Personal Online Presence Safeguarding Matters

Teaching is a highly public-facing profession. What you share online, even in a personal capacity, directly affects your professional reputation, the reputation of Sikh Academies Trust, and the safety of our pupils. The digital landscape has changed constantly, and new, complex risks have emerged. Recent national findings show that nearly three in five teachers believe social media has had a negative effect on behaviour in schools, contributing to an increase in misogynistic and abusive behaviours.

Furthermore, school staff increasingly face online bullying, harassment, public criticism, malicious misinformation, and even deepfakes or manipulated digital content via social platforms, often with little direct accountability. Safeguarding your social media presence is no longer just about privacy, it is an essential matter of safety, public trust, and professional integrity. Any interaction with pupils, even indirect, via personal accounts is a safeguarding issue.

1.2 The Personal Digital Footprint Audit: Six Key Steps

All staff members are required to regularly audit and maintain their personal digital footprints to ensure they reflect the polished, professional image expected of educators. Follow these six essential steps:

1. **Audit Your Accounts:** Take a scroll through your public profiles as if you are seeing them for the first time through the eyes of a student, parent, or colleague. Assess what story your profiles tell and ensure it is one you are proud to share.
2. **Tighten Privacy Settings:** Set all personal profiles to 'private' or the strict equivalent. Dive deep into the settings of each platform to restrict who can see your posts, who can search for you, who can tag you, and who can share your content. Think of this as setting strict boundaries for your personal online classroom.
3. **Profile Cleanup:** Archive or permanently delete historical, informal, or potentially inappropriate photos (e.g., social gatherings, beach parties, or photos featuring alcohol/unsuitable environments from years past). Keep your public profile picture and main presence professional.
4. **Professional Bio Boundaries:** Keep your public biography snappy, clean, and representative of you, but ensure it contains absolutely nothing you would mind your headteacher or a parent reading.
5. **Check Group Associations:** Review the groups, pages, forums, and online communities you are associated with. Ensure you are not linked with any inappropriate, controversial, or politically extreme groups.
6. **Regular searching:** Regularly search for your name and pictures on search engines to see what public information is visible to others. Take proactive steps to request the removal or correction of any false, misleading, or inappropriate search results.

1.3 Strict Usage and Device Security Protocols

To protect school network security, ensure compliance with UK GDPR, and optimise workload, staff must adhere to the following rules:

- **No Personal Use in Class/Duty Time:** Staff members must not access personal social media platforms during lesson times or when on duty, where doing so interferes with professional responsibilities. Usage is strictly permitted only during designated break times.

- **School Owned Devices:** Staff members are prohibited from using any school-owned mobile phones, laptops, or tablets to access personal social media accounts.
- **Network and WiFi Security:** Personal accounts must not be accessed via the school's WiFi network, unless prior permission is obtained from the principal and the IT team has implemented necessary network security and filtering controls.
- **Device Hand-off Security:** Never leave a computer or mobile device logged in when away from your desk. Never auto-save passwords to personal accounts on shared or work devices.
- **Separate Emails:** Always keep personal and professional correspondence strictly separate. Use your official academy email address for school business and personal email for private communications; the two must never be mixed.

3.4 Maintaining Professional Boundaries & Contact Restrictions

Maintaining clear professional boundaries online is critical to safeguarding staff and protecting students. Any direct or indirect personal online contact with pupils or parents outside school-authorised channels is strictly prohibited.

- **Strict 'No Friending/Following' Rule:** Staff must not 'friend', 'follow', accept request from, or contact pupils or parents/carers through personal social media accounts. This applies to current students and, in safeguarding contexts, past students.
- **Exception for Existing Relationships:** Staff may only connect with parents or pupils if there is an explicit, pre-existing family or close personal relationship outside of school, which has been formally declared and approved by the Headteacher.
- **Reporting Contact Attempts:** If a pupil or parent attempts to 'friend', 'follow', or message a staff member on their personal account, the staff member must immediately report this attempt to the Headteacher. Be vigilant to look for fake profiles pretending to be a friend / colleague.
- **Protection of Personal Contact Info:** Staff must never provide their personal home address, home/mobile phone number, personal email, or personal social media handles to pupils or parents. All professional communication must go through official, school-authorised channels.
- **Separate Professional Accounts:** If a staff member requires a social media presence for educational purposes (e.g. subject-specific discussion or department showcase), the account must be pre-authorised, supervised, and approved by the school. It must be completely separate from any personal accounts.
- **Reporting Concerns Identified Online:** If a member of staff becomes aware through personal social media of any information that raises a safeguarding concern regarding a pupil, they must immediately report this concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

3.5 Content and Conduct Guidelines on Personal Accounts

While staff members are entitled to a private life, professional codes of conduct apply to online activities at all times. Any out-of-work activity that brings the school into disrepute or breaches professional standards is a disciplinary matter.

- **Reputation and Disrepute:** Do not post any content online that risks bringing the school, its staff, or its pupils into disrepute. This includes inappropriate out-of-work activity, such as posting highly controversial, offensive, discriminatory, or sexually explicit content, or content showing excessive/unprofessional consumption of alcohol.
- **Clarify Views are Personal:** Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they must ensure it is explicitly clear in their biography or posts that their views are entirely personal

and do not represent the official stance of the school.

- **Zero Pupil/School Identification:** Staff must not post any information, images, videos, or personal data that could identify a pupil, class, or the school itself. Never publish images or information of pupils obtained through your employment on personal accounts
- **No Aliases to Evade Guidance:** Staff members must not post anonymously or under a pseudonym or alias for the purpose of evading the rules and guidance set out in this policy.
- **Professionalism Towards Colleagues and Parents:** Do not post confidential, inappropriate, discriminatory, defamatory, or professionally unacceptable comments about colleagues, parents, pupils, or any members of the school community. Attempts to bully, coerce, or manipulate colleagues or community members online will be dealt with in line with policy.

3.6 Safeguarding, Support and Policy Breach Consequences

Breaches of this policy are taken extremely seriously. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, inappropriate online behaviour can lead to severe career damage, disciplinary action, dismissal, or criminal prosecution.

- **Harm Threshold and Allegations:** Concerns or allegations regarding a staff member's online behaviour indicating they have harmed a child, posed a risk, behaved unsuitably, or committed an offence related to a child will be reported and managed in accordance with policy. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Executive Headteacher. If the concern is about the Executive Headteacher it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
- **Low-Level Safeguarding Concerns:** Concerns about a staff member's online behaviour that do not meet the harm threshold (such as minor boundary slips or accidental unprofessional interactions) must be reported via the low level concerns form on the school dashboard.
- **Cyberbullying Support:** The school has a strict duty to support staff who face online abuse, harassment, or cyberbullying. Staff members must not respond or retaliate to online attacks; they must document the evidence (screenshots with timestamps) and report the incident to the Headteacher. Wellbeing support details can be found on the school dashboard.

3.7 Before You Post: Staff Personal Self-Checklist

Before hitting 'publish' on any personal post, story, image, or comment, take thirty seconds to ask yourself these key questions:

- Does this post reveal anything I wouldn't want a parent, pupil, or colleague to associate with me professionally?
- Could a pupil, parent, or colleague misunderstand my message, joke, or underlying intent?
- If I used a joke, meme, or video clip, could it be misinterpreted as offensive, insensitive, or biased?
- Is this content completely consistent with my school's Staff Code of Conduct and Social Media Policy?
- Am I fully comfortable being identified in this post, either by my image, my name, or my location?
- Have I checked and updated my privacy settings on this platform in the last month?