

# Viking Academy Trust



## Close Personal Relationships At Work Policy

Approved by the Trust: Term 6 2017

Reviewed biennially: Term 6

Last review date: Term 6 2024

Signed:

Chair of Trust

# Close Personal Relationships at Work Policy

## Viking Academy Trust

Empowering children through education: One Childhood One Chance

### Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

Chilton Primary School  
Ramsgate Arts Primary School  
Upton Junior School

This '**Close Personal Relationships at Work Policy**' is for all the aforementioned Viking schools.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Viking Academy Trust (VAT) is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and integrity amongst all staff. As part of this it is necessary to distinguish between personal relationships and professional ones and to have arrangements in place that safeguard all parties in circumstances where these have the potential to overlap.

The Board of Trustees will delegate authority to the Executive Headteacher to take action under the procedure outlined below, and will monitor the use of this procedure for effectiveness and fairness.

#### 2. THE POLICY

An employee/member of governance must declare to the Executive Headteacher / Director of Education / Head of School any close personal relationship that could involve a potential conflict of interest for the employee or otherwise conflict with the employees' responsibilities at work.

The VAT will act upon such a declaration to ensure that any potential conflict of interest is avoided and/or to ensure that the employee is not compromised in their work with the Trust.

The 'Close Personal Relationships at Work Policy' applies to all employees and members of Governance at Viking Academy Trust. An employee/member of governance who does not declare a close personal relationship at work in accordance with the requirements of the policy may be subject to appropriate action in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

### **3. OPERATION OF THE POLICY**

Examples of close personal relationships that could involve a potential conflict of interest for an employee or otherwise conflict with the employee's responsibilities at work include but are not limited to:

- Family relationships
- Sexual or other intimate relationships
- Business, financial and commercial relationships

The circumstances in which personal relationships at work must be declared, include, but are not limited to:

- Any close personal relationship between an interview panel member and an applicant for employment with the Viking Academy Trust
- Any close personal relationship between a line manager or a senior leader and an employee responsible to that line manager or to a senior leader on the same management line

Any close personal relationship between a member of governance and an employee of the Trust

- Any close personal relationship between an employee and an existing or potential (i.e. through the operation of the VAT's tendering processes) supplier of goods or services to the School.

Whilst the Viking Academy trust is a primary-phased MAT, and therefore pupils move on to secondary education at the age of 11 years old; it is noted that the Trust regards as wholly unacceptable any close personal relationship between an

employee/governor and a child/young person who is under the age of 18 (19 if still at school) whom they meet as a result of their employment.

Whilst unlikely for an employee / governor to come in to contact with pupils between the age of 12-19 as part of their employment, the Trust does work with secondary aged pupils for work experience placements, IB community placements.

If this type of relationship exists/develops, it is highly likely to represent an abuse of the employee/governor's position of trust, a breach of the standards of propriety expected in the post and a compromise of professional standards.

The Executive Headteacher must invoke the Trust's safeguarding procedure immediately, before potentially taking action under the disciplinary procedure for alleged gross misconduct.

In addition to the particular cases set out above, it is the responsibility of the employee/governor to assess any other circumstances in which there could be a requirement in accordance with this policy to declare a personal relationship at work.

If an employee/governor is in any doubt about the circumstances when a close personal relationship should be disclosed they must seek guidance from their Line Manager or the Head or take advice from their Trade Union Representative.

The expectation is that if an employee/governor is in doubt about the requirement to declare a close personal relationship at work the employee/governor should declare the relationship in accordance with this policy.

An employee/governor who needs to declare a personal relationship at work should set out the relevant circumstances in writing to the Executive Headteacher / Head of School.

In respect of the Executive Headteacher/ Director of Education /Head of School or member of Governance, the declaration should be provided to the Chair of the Trust Board. Upon receipt of a declaration the Executive Headteacher (Chair of Trust or other senior leader as appropriate) will meet with the employee/governor. In accordance with the policy the purpose of the

meeting will be to agree the actions that are necessary to avoid any potential conflict of interest and or to ensure that the employee/governor is not compromised in their work with the Trust.

The agreed actions will be recorded and placed on the employee's personnel file and a copy will be given to the employee/governor. If it is considered unavoidable to inform other members of staff about the relationship in order to explain a change in management arrangements, this will be discussed with the individuals concerned, before it is disclosed.

If the circumstances of the personal relationship change the employee must so advise the Executive Headteacher / Director of Education / Head of School. The previously agreed actions will be reviewed in discussion between the employee/governor and Executive Headteacher and an updated note will be produced and attached to the original.