

Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct

Employees and Volunteers must put each child's safety at the forefront of everything they do. They must comply with all the [Academic Families policies](#), and in particular [Safeguarding Policy](#), [Child Protection Policy](#), [Online Safety Policy](#) and [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Mission

The Academic Families mission is to support parents to successfully educate their children internationally. We hope to help develop Safe, Happy and Successful Students.

Our [guiding principles and values](#) are at the core of how Employees and Volunteers must conduct themselves at all times.

- child centred focus
- professional
- integrity
- transparency
- empathy

Our [core competencies](#) include

- child centred focus
- empathy – personal experience
- best in class – qualifications and accreditations
- languages

All Employees and Volunteer Hosts are expected to share and uphold our values and competencies at all times. If there is ever any doubt about how to behave, then guidance should be sought from your manager or Volunteer main contact.

Duty of care to children and young people

Employees and volunteers have a duty of care to ensure the student's wellbeing and safety at all times.

Power and positions of trust

Employees and volunteers must remember they are the responsible adult at all times, even when a student is 18 years old. They must not take advantage of their position of trust.

Sexual contact with young people

Any sexual behaviour by an employee or volunteer towards a student is unacceptable. It is an offence for an adult in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a student under 18 years of age.

Exercising professional judgement

Volunteers are expected to report to the Academic Families Employees if they learn anything of note or concern. They must not make any judgement, particularly where cultural issues may have an impact. Employees must escalate anything of note or interest. Direction on professional judgement concerning safeguarding should be taken from the Child Protection Officer's lead.

Communication with students

Employees and Volunteers should communicate appropriately with students and encourage polite acknowledgement of messages. Communication and expectation of response times should take account of their school timetable and where possible contact should be avoided during class time.

Social contact with students Employees and Volunteers should avoid connecting with students on social media and maintain an appropriate adult child relationship at all times.

Social contact with parents / agents / staff at partner schools Employees and Volunteers should maintain professional contact with the student's associated team members.

Physical contact including restraint

Employees and Volunteers should avoid physical contact other than to greet and bid farewell to their student. Many cultures do not hug or air kiss so this should be avoided. If your family is a very physical family then the student should be invited to discuss their views which should then guide appropriate behaviour. If in doubt, then discuss with our Child Protection Officer.

An outright ban on any corporal punishment

Employees and Volunteers should not practise any form of corporal punishment.

Care of distressed students

Employees and Volunteers should console their distressed student by asking them how they feel and listening to them. You should not give advice nor promise confidentiality. Physical contact should be age and culture appropriate.

One-to-one meetings

Employees and Volunteers should be sensitive to one-to-one meetings and if there is any concern then should avoid one-to-one meetings.

Students' entitlement to privacy

Employees and Volunteers should respect a student's right to privacy however this should be balanced with their need to be included and encouraged to join in. If a student asks for privacy

this should be respected. Bathroom and toilet doors should be lockable. Host children should be encouraged to respect a student's privacy.

Transporting students

Employees and Volunteers should ensure seat belts are worn and booster seats are used as required. Car insurers should be notified that you may transport children in your car – as part of your job for employees and as a volunteer for hosts. Students should sit in the back where possible.

Gifts and rewards

Employees and Volunteers should neither give nor receive substantial gifts to or from students. Small Christmas and 'cultural gifts from home' should be accepted gracefully and the student and parents must be thanked. Parents and students should never expect to curry favour by gifting to either an Employee or Volunteer however, small thank you gifts should be appreciated in the spirit of their being gifted.

Use of photographs and videos

Employees and Volunteers should only take photos of a student where permission has been granted by parents. Photos should only be uploaded to ILP and not shared to anyone. Parents can download them from ILP but photos of children must never be transmitted to any adult other than within the Academic Families team, especially overseas. The student's file on ILP states their photography permission status. Where photos are taken, care should be given to avoid compromising backgrounds eg no alcohol bottles. Physical contact should be avoided and everyone should be appropriately dressed. Photos and videos should not be taken in bedrooms or bathrooms or be of any intimate nature. Think 'don't shock my teetotal elderly granny'!

Searching students and their belongings

If Employees and Volunteers have reason to want to search a student or their belongings then they must have the student's approval and where that is not given, then their parents'. Volunteers should contact Academic Families if they have cause to consider searching a student or their belongings and we will request the parent's permission. At all times, two adults should be present if a search takes place.

Mutual respect and cultural awareness

Employees, Volunteers, Students, Parents and School staff should all be treated with respect at all times. We should always be sensitive to cultural differences and discuss where you may feel a child is disrespectful or rude.

Dress code

Employees and Volunteers should always represent Academic Families as a professional, warm and supportive organisation. Dress should be professional or at best smart casual regardless of what students and their parents wear.