

Mary Pugsley MBE

Director, Hair at the Academy



Code of Conduct & Staff Behaviour Policy

Written by Mary Pugsley MBE

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Hair@theAcademy is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 9223155.

Registered office: 8 Feltrim Avenue Exeter Devon EX24RP UKPKN 10047420

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1. Purpose and principles

Hair at the Academy staff occupy positions of trust and influence. This policy sets the minimum standards of professional conduct expected to safeguard children and vulnerable learners, protect staff from avoidable allegations, promote a safe and inclusive learning environment and maintain

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confidence in Hair at the Academy. It should be read alongside Hair at the Academy's safeguarding, whistleblowing, equality diversity and inclusion, health and safety, data protection and GDPR, behaviour and risk-management procedures and policies.

Act in the best interests of children and learners and maintain clear professional boundaries.

Treat learners, colleagues, parents/carers and visitors with dignity, respect, fairness and courtesy.

Act honestly, with integrity, impartiality and appropriate professional judgement.

Recognise the power imbalance between adults and learners and never exploit a position of trust.

Use the least restrictive, safest and most proportionate response to risk; prevention and de-escalation come first.

Report safeguarding concerns, low-level concerns, allegations, accidents and significant incidents promptly and accurately.

2. Scope and status

This policy applies during working time, educational visits, or any activity where staff have responsibility for learners, online activity connected with work, and conduct outside work where it may affect suitability to work with children, safeguarding, trust and confidence, or Hair at the Academies reputation. Failure to comply may result in safeguarding action, referral to external agencies and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3. Legal and statutory framework

Hair at the Academy will have regard to legislation and guidance applicable to its legal status and the nature of each placement. Key sources include:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) – KCSIE 2025 remains in force until 31 August 2026; KCSIE 2026 comes into force on 1 September 2026.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) – statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance for England.

[Alternative Provision statutory guidance](#) – updated February 2025 and applicable across educational settings providing AP.

[Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards](#) – DfE standards published August 2025 for non-school/unregistered AP.

[Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools](#) – DfE guidance effective from 1 April 2026; includes statutory guidance on recording/reporting significant use-of-force incidents for schools.

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[Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 93 and 93A](#) – school-staff power to use reasonable force and school recording/reporting framework, where applicable.

[Equality Act 2010](#) – discrimination, harassment, victimisation and reasonable adjustments.

[Worker Protection \(Amendment of Equality Act 2010\) Act 2023](#) – employer duty, in force from 26 October 2024, to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees.

[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) – employer and employee health and safety duties.

[Data Protection Act 2018](#) – data protection requirements alongside the UK GDPR.

[Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#) – statutory guidance under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 for specified authorities.

[Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) – sexual offences and positions of trust.

[Human Rights Act 1998](#) – relevant to dignity, privacy and restrictions on liberty.

[Children Act 1989](#) – core child protection framework.

[Children Act 2004](#) – safeguarding and partnership duties.

[Childcare Act 2006](#) – childcare framework, including disqualification where applicable.

[Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Early Years Provision \(Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) – disqualification rules where the provision/role falls within scope.

4. Professional standards and responsibilities

Carry out reasonable duties within the scope of the role and follow lawful management instructions, policies, risk assessments and safeguarding plans.

Maintain professional language, appearance and behaviour appropriate to an education and workplace setting.

Do not humiliate, ridicule, intimidate, threaten, swear at, discriminate against or deliberately provoke a learner.

Do not develop secretive, dependent or exclusive relationships with learners, show favouritism, give inappropriate gifts, or share personal information in a way that blurs professional boundaries.

Do not falsify, conceal, destroy or improperly alter records; all records must be accurate, timely and factual.

Do not make unauthorised statements on behalf of Hair at the Academy or provide organisational references without authority.

Attend required safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour/de-escalation and other mandatory training.

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5. Equality, dignity and reasonable adjustments

Hair at the Academy will comply with the Equality Act 2010. Staff must not discriminate, harass or victimise because of a protected characteristic and must support reasonable adjustments where required. Behaviour expectations and risk-management responses must consider disability, SEND, communication needs, trauma, culture and other relevant individual factors without lowering safeguarding standards.

6. Safeguarding and position of trust

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is everyone's responsibility. All learners under 18 are children in law. Staff must maintain professional boundaries and act in accordance with the current KCSIE version in force, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Hair at the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Never pursue or enter a sexual or romantic relationship with a learner.

Never use a professional relationship to establish an inappropriate relationship with a former learner; seek safeguarding advice where there is any risk of exploitation or abuse of trust.

Do not exchange personal contact details or communicate through personal social-media accounts with learners, except where an established family relationship is known to Hair at the Academy and appropriately managed.

Use only approved organisational systems for learner communication and record significant safeguarding-related communications.

Report concerns about a child immediately to the DSL/DDSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures; do not investigate concerns yourself.

7. Low-level concerns and allegations

A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour towards or concerning a child that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside work, but does not meet the harm threshold. The term "low-level" does not mean insignificant. Concerns should be shared promptly so patterns can be identified and action taken.

being over-friendly or sharing inappropriate personal information;

favouritism, pet names or gifts that are not transparently authorised;

using a personal device to photograph a learner;

one-to-one contact in unnecessarily secluded or unobservable circumstances;

inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating, discriminatory or offensive language;

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Concerns meeting the harm threshold, or patterns that may meet it, must be escalated under Hair at the Academy's allegations procedure and referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required. Concerns about the Director/DSL must be reported to the appropriate alternative senior person/DDSL and, where necessary, directly to the LADO or relevant authority.

8. Physical contact, restrictive interventions and reasonable force

8.1 General rule

Physical contact with learners must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, appropriate to the learner's needs and in keeping with professional boundaries. Staff should avoid contact that could reasonably be interpreted as sexual, punitive, humiliating, threatening or unnecessary. Physical contact must never be used as corporal punishment, to cause pain, to secure compliance merely because a learner refuses an instruction, or as a substitute for effective behaviour support.

8.2 Appropriate non-restrictive contact

Some contact may be appropriate, for example first aid, preventing an immediate accident, practical instruction where contact is necessary and consent/communication is appropriate, or brief reassurance that is clearly welcomed and professionally appropriate. Staff should consider age, SEND, trauma history, cultural factors, communication needs and the learner's expressed preferences. Where a learner indicates discomfort, contact should stop unless immediate safety requires otherwise.

8.3 Restrictive intervention and force

From 1 April 2026, DfE guidance for schools emphasises prevention, early support and de-escalation and states that restrictive interventions can have a significant impact. Where force is lawful, it must be reasonable in the circumstances. The minimum necessary intervention should be used for the shortest time required, with ongoing attention to breathing, distress, injury and medical risk. Staff must summon assistance wherever practicable and stop as soon as the immediate need has ended.

8.4 Legal status in alternative provision

School-based AP: Where the provision is a maintained school, academy/free school, PRU, non-maintained special school or independent school, section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 may permit authorised school staff to use reasonable force in defined circumstances, including preventing an offence, injury, property damage or serious prejudice to good order and discipline,

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while the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil. The power does not authorise corporal punishment.

Non-school/unregistered AP: The section 93 school power should not be assumed to extend to an independent non-school AP provider simply because it educates a child placed by a school or local authority. Hair at the Academy must identify its legal status and the basis on which each member of staff acts. For non-school AP, any planned restrictive intervention must be specifically supported by lawful authority, commissioning arrangements, risk assessment, training and Hair at the Academy procedure. In an emergency, other legal principles may permit reasonable force, such as self-defence/defence of another or prevention of crime; these are fact-specific and do not create a general behaviour-management power.

8.5 Prevention and planning

Use positive relationships, predictable routines, clear communication, co-regulation, environmental adjustments and de-escalation before restrictive intervention wherever possible.

For learners with known behaviours that may present serious risk, ensure an individual risk assessment/behaviour support plan identifies triggers, preventative strategies, communication needs, agreed responses and post-incident support.

Consider Equality Act duties and reasonable adjustments, particularly for disabled learners and learners with SEND.

Only staff with appropriate competence and training should use planned restrictive techniques. Training does not itself create legal authority to use force.

Do not use techniques intended to inflict pain, restrict breathing, deliberately obstruct the airway, or use pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen. Avoid prone or other high-risk positions; any exceptional emergency response must be immediately necessary and cease as soon as safety permits.

8.6 Recording, reporting and review

Every restrictive intervention or use of force must be reported internally to the Director/DSL as soon as possible and recorded before the end of the working day wherever practicable. The record should include antecedents, de-escalation attempted, reason for intervention, staff involved, nature/duration of contact, injuries or medical attention, witnesses, learner's account, parent/carers/commissioner notification and follow-up actions. For schools within section 93A and the applicable 2025 regulations, significant use-of-force incidents and reportable seclusion/restraint must be recorded and reported to parents in accordance with the statutory requirements and DfE guidance. Hair at the Academy will apply an equivalent transparent recording standard as good practice even where those school-specific duties do not directly apply, subject to safeguarding exceptions and commissioning requirements.

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After an incident, staff should check welfare, offer appropriate first aid/medical assessment, give the learner an opportunity to explain their experience, inform relevant safeguarding/commissioning personnel, consider whether the incident is a safeguarding concern, and review the plan to reduce recurrence. Repeated or concerning use of restrictive intervention must be reviewed by senior leadership and the DSL.

9. One-to-one working, intimate/personal care and first aid

One-to-one work should be planned so it is observable or interruptible where reasonably possible; avoid unnecessary closed/locked doors or secluded locations.

Where privacy is required for a legitimate reason, ensure another appropriate adult knows where the session is taking place and follow risk-assessed procedures.

Intimate or personal care must only be provided where the role and care plan authorise it, preserving dignity, privacy and choice and following safeguarding procedures.

First aid should be provided by appropriately trained staff within their competence; necessary contact should be explained and consent sought where practicable. Record treatment and safeguarding concerns.

10. Communication, mobile devices, photography and social media

Use Hair at the Academy approved email, learning platforms and devices for work-related communication with learners and parents/carers.

Do not use personal phones to photograph or record learners for portfolio/evidence purposes. Use approved devices and obtain/verify the required consent and lawful basis.

Do not store learner images or confidential information on personal devices, personal cloud storage or personal messaging accounts.

Do not “friend”, follow or privately message current learners through personal social-media accounts unless an established family relationship has been declared and appropriately managed.

Do not post confidential information, learner images, workplace grievances, discriminatory/offensive content or material that could undermine safeguarding or professional trust.

Report accidental boundary breaches, misdirected messages, loss of devices or data incidents immediately.

11. Data protection, confidentiality and information sharing

Personal data must be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, Hair at the Academy’s Data Protection Policy and safeguarding information-sharing requirements. Access

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information only where needed for the role, keep it secure, and report suspected data breaches immediately. Confidentiality is not absolute: relevant information should be shared lawfully and proportionately where necessary to safeguard a child. Staff must not promise a child absolute confidentiality.

12. Attendance, honesty, property and conflicts of interest

Attend work and required activities punctually and accurately record hours worked.

Follow procedures for sickness, appointments, annual leave and other absence.

Handle money, expenses, qualifications, records, equipment and Hair at the Academy property honestly and accurately.

Declare actual or potential conflicts of interest, including personal relationships or financial interests that could affect professional judgement.

Do not accept gifts, hospitality or benefits that could create an obligation or appearance of impropriety.

13. Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment

Bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and sexual harassment are prohibited. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Since 26 October 2024 employers have a statutory duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees. Hair at the Academy will assess risks, set clear standards, provide reporting routes and take appropriate preventive and corrective action.

sexual comments, jokes, messages or images;

unwanted touching or physical contact;

sexual propositions, pressure or repeated invitations;

harassment linked to a protected characteristic;

bullying, intimidation, exclusion, humiliating conduct or misuse of authority;

retaliation against a person who raises or supports a concern.

14. Alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping

Staff must be fit to work and must not be impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, misused medication or other substances. Illegal possession, supply or use is prohibited. Staff taking prescribed or over-the-counter medication that may impair safe performance should seek appropriate advice and inform

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management where necessary for safety. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in front of learners and in areas where Hair at the Academy policy or law prohibits them.

15. Health, safety and wellbeing

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Hair at the Academy and its staff have responsibilities for health and safety. Staff must take reasonable care of themselves and others, cooperate with safety arrangements, follow risk assessments and training, use equipment safely, report hazards/accidents/near misses, and not misuse safety equipment. Staff should raise concerns where workload, lone working, violence/aggression or environmental conditions create foreseeable risk.

16. Conduct outside work and self-reporting

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work that may make them unsuitable to work with children, undermine safeguarding, seriously damage trust and confidence, or bring Hair at the Academy into disrepute. Staff must promptly tell the Director/DSL of relevant arrests, charges, cautions, convictions, bail conditions, restraining orders, safeguarding investigations, professional restrictions or other circumstances that may affect suitability, subject to lawful data-processing and recruitment rules. Staff are encouraged to self-report any interaction or boundary issue that could be misinterpreted or that, on reflection, fell below this policy.

17. Prevent duty and radicalisation

Where HATA or the commissioning body is subject to the Prevent duty, staff must understand safeguarding responsibilities relating to susceptibility to radicalisation and follow the setting's Prevent risk assessment and referral procedure. Concerns about radicalisation should be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported to the DSL. HATA will also use the 2023 Prevent guidance as good practice where it is not itself a specified authority but supports learners placed by one.

18. Reporting, whistleblowing and escalation

Immediate danger or suspected crime: take proportionate steps to protect people and contact emergency services where required.

Safeguarding concern about a learner: report immediately to the DSL/DDSL under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Concern about an adult's conduct: report promptly under the low-level concerns/allegations procedure; do not wait for proof.

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Concern about the Director/DSL: use the alternative reporting route set out in the safeguarding policy and contact the LADO/local authority where appropriate.

If internal routes are inappropriate, ineffective or the concern is about organisational wrongdoing, use Hair at the Academy's Whistleblowing Policy and applicable external routes.

Do not victimise, disadvantage or retaliate against anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith.

19. Childcare disqualification

The Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 apply only to specified childcare provision and roles. Hair at the Academy will determine whether a post is within scope rather than applying disqualification requirements indiscriminately. Where a role is in scope, staff must provide information required by lawful procedures and promptly report relevant changes that may affect disqualification or suitability. Hair at the Academy will handle such information confidentially and in accordance with data protection law.

20. Breaches, disciplinary action and review

A breach of this policy may result in management action, safeguarding procedures, disciplinary action up to dismissal, referral to the LADO, DBS, police, professional regulator, commissioning body or other authority where required. Hair at the Academy will review this policy at least annually and sooner following material changes to law, statutory guidance, organisational status or learning from incidents.

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Appendix A – Physical intervention decision framework

Stage	Required approach
1. Prevent	Use relationship-based support, adjustments, space, communication, de-escalation and help from colleagues.
2. Assess	What is the immediate risk? Is physical intervention necessary now? What legal authority applies in this setting and to this member of staff?
3. Choose least restrictive option	Use the minimum intervention reasonably necessary. Never use force as punishment or simply to compel compliance.
4. Monitor and stop	Continuously monitor distress, breathing, injury and changing risk. Stop as soon as the need ends.
5. Obtain help	Call for trained assistance/emergency services where required. Seek medical help after injury, breathing difficulty, loss of consciousness or significant distress.
6. Record and report	Record promptly, notify DSL/management, parent/carers and commissioner as required, and comply with school statutory reporting duties where applicable.
7. Review	Hear the learner's account, support staff and learner, consider safeguarding implications and revise risk/support plans.

Prohibited practice

corporal punishment;

force used to punish, humiliate, intimidate or cause pain;

planned physical intervention by staff who are not appropriately authorised/competent for the setting and plan;

restricting breathing or deliberately obstructing the airway;

continuing restraint after the immediate need has ended;

failing to report or record a restrictive intervention;

using seclusion or locked isolation except where a lawful, specifically authorised framework applies.

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Appendix B – Key legislation and guidance links

The following links were checked when this policy was updated on 18 August 2026. Staff should use the current version in force and HATA should review links at each policy review.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) – KCSIE 2025 remains in force until 31 August 2026; KCSIE 2026 comes into force on 1 September 2026.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) – statutory multi-agency safeguarding guidance for England.

[Alternative Provision statutory guidance](#) – updated February 2025 and applicable across educational settings providing AP.

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[DfE research: reasonable force, restraint and restrictive practices in alternative provision and special schools](#) – research published March 2024; useful context for AP practice, training, minimisation and recording.

[ICO data protection guidance for organisations](#) – current regulatory guidance on UK data protection obligations.

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Staff acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood this Code of Conduct & Staff Behaviour Policy, know how to access the related safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures, and understand my responsibility to raise concerns promptly.

Name

Role

Signature

Date

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