

Procedure for Workers with Children Attending a STEP Academy

Date of Procedure: October 2015

Review: October 2018

Introduction

The STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Procedure and as such, it applies to all Academies within The STEP Academy Trust (“the Trust”).

It is not unusual for some members of staff to have child relatives attending the Academy where they work. It is therefore important to establish some clear principles to ensure that staff members and their child relatives understand expectations in what could otherwise quickly become a blurred public/private, unsafe, setting. Blurred boundaries can lead to issues of:

- Health and safety
- Safeguarding
- Professional conduct

The establishment of clear expectations in terms of staff/child relative relationships is rooted in the key principle that the Academy is, by its very nature, a school and not a home setting. Therefore, Academy/STEP policies should always be kept in mind in order to maintain clear lines of reference between a member of staff who might have a child relative at the Academy and their child relative.

Not all expectations can be listed in this Procedure and it is therefore crucial that any member of staff with a child relative at the Academy uses their professional judgement to keep boundaries clear and, therefore, not put themselves at risk. In case of uncertainty, staff with child relatives at the Academy should seek support from senior leaders at the Academy.

For the sake of clarity, it is expected that staff members with child relatives at the Academy realise, and acknowledge, that they are at the Academy to work and that their child relative is to be treated as a pupil at all times during Academy hours. Likewise, it is expected that a child with an adult relative working at the Academy sees them as a professional adult as opposed to their relative. It is clear that understanding will vary depending on the age of the child. It is therefore important to ensure that children with relatives working at the Academy are taught what is expected of them by their adult relative. Excuses such as ‘They’re too young to understand’ should not, and cannot, be used.

It is also important for all adults to be able to work with children who might have adult relatives at the Academy with all children in similar ways, irrespective of the fact that some children are related to some of their colleagues. Preferential treatment – sometimes occurring unconsciously – should be avoided as it could be seen as a conflict. What would be expected of any child should also be expected of children who might have adult relatives at the Academy. To avoid

unconsciously treating children differently, it is important that all staff reflect on how they will need to behave/act in such cases.

Some examples of what is to be expected during working hours (note that this is not an exhaustive list and that, as stated above, one's professional judgement should be used to avoid conflicts of interest; the onus is on the adult with a child relative to check, as opposed to the senior management to check/remind):

- Children should call their relative by their title ('Mr, Mrs, Miss, Mademoiselle, Madame, Monsieur) and surname in line with Academy policy (as opposed to mum, dad, auntie, etc.);
- Children should raise concerns with adults other than their relative (eg behaviour issues, work issues, etc), unless they are immediately at risk;
- Children should receive first aid, as and when needed, from adults other than their relative.
- Should a child forget their PE kit, etc, their parent/carer should be informed in line with Academy policy and not be discussed directly in the Academy;
- Issues about a child who has an adult relative working at the Academy should never be discussed with their relative during working hours. If necessary, appointments outside working hours need to be made, as would be the case with other parents/carer;
- Parents' Evening meetings need to be arranged outside of working hours;
- Adults with child relatives at the Academy should not eat with them at lunch, unless it falls within the family dining lunch rota (whereby adults eat with different children every day);
- On educational visits, should it happen that an adult goes with a class where a child relative of theirs is, the child and the adult should not be in the same group;
- Should an issue arise whereby an adult with a child relative at the Academy notices that their child relative has breached a particular Academy policy (eg behaviour), they need to respond as they would with any other children;
- Operational and strategic issues discussed between staff should not be disclosed to children, particularly when they are connected to individual children/staff at the Academy. Likewise, issues related to parents/carers of children at the Academy should not be disclosed to child relatives;
- As with any other children, rules about attendance and punctuality for children who have an adult relative at the Academy apply. Should there be the need for an adult with a child relative to drop them off or collect them a few minutes before the beginning or end of the Academy day, a discussion with a senior member of staff should take place.

All members of staff are expected to read this Procedure and sign it prior to the beginning of the academic year.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____