

Staff Code of Conduct



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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure our organisation is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect, where everyone is able to hold in balance Love, Fun, Freedom, Power and Survival (Glasser) which are the values of the charity and underpin our purpose

Releasing Potential staff have an influential position in the organisation and will act as role models by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect all support staff, trustees, governors and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

We believe that integrity is a vital element in operating a successful organisation. Releasing Potential is firmly committed to maintaining relationships based on openness, care and mutual respect. This applies to our interactions with each other, with the students, with other professionals and with the community at large.

We see a culture of honesty and transparency as key in safeguarding vulnerable children. At Releasing Potential, it is essential that we all feel safe to challenge and be challenged. In this way we can continually reflect on and improve our practice and, therefore, improve outcomes for young people. We expect challenge to be made through effective conversations which bring about positive outcomes without damaging relationships.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in our staff disciplinary procedures.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the organisation and its pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we should have a staff code of conduct, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistle-blowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

3. General obligations

Staff set an example to pupils. They will:

- Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- Never use inappropriate or offensive language in organisation
- Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- Show tolerance and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within

4. Safeguarding

Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the Operational Document and on the organisation website. New staff will be given copies on arrival.

4.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the organisation, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of organisation

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the head of school, or the Governor for Safeguarding, where the head of school is the subject of the allegation.

4.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policies.. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4.3 Whistleblowing

See Whistleblowing policy.

5. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

RP believes firmly in the principle of sustained commitment in its work with young people. Whilst unacceptable behaviour should be challenged and managed, it is essential young people are aware that a fresh start is always possible. RP believes in a flexible and responsive approach and creative solutions when working with vulnerable and challenging young people. It is recognised that staff must establish rapport with young people and provide support that optimises the potential for them to achieve in their education. However, staff are also responsible for ensuring that they establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries between themselves and young people and their families.

There is no single definition of what constitutes professional boundaries. Our intention is to achieve a shared understanding of acceptable and unacceptable practice, enabling us to apply clear and consistent standards across RP services. Professional boundary examples are set out below;

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of organisation hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

- Staff must not have contact with young people or their family members on social networking sites and must not accept young people or their family members as friends on e.g. Facebook.
- Staff must not give students or their family members their personal contact details, for example postal address, telephone number, email address, social media contact information etc.
- Staff must keep all social media privacy setting at the highest level.
- Staff must not give young people or their family members the personal contact details of any colleague.
- Staff who encounter RP young people out of hours should be pleasant and civil if approached but should generally discourage prolonged social contact. Staff should not approach RP young people in any social setting if the contact is not instigated by the young person.
- Staff must not have out-of-hours contact with a young person or their family member(s) unless directed to do so by a senior manager for exceptional operational reasons. If this does occur the staff member should report to their line manager as soon as possible. Work mobile phone records are spot checked to ensure that only legitimate contact with students and their families is undertaken by staff.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the organisation year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

RP operates a hands-off policy in relation to physical contact. Staff should approach physical contact with young people with great care and caution. Where touching does occur, it must take place within the specific local work instructions or professional boundaries within the service.

Some young people may misinterpret physical contact as affection outside the professional relationship. Pupils may also see physical contact as expressions or favouritism, for example where a staff member hugs one pupil and not another. All staff should therefore be aware that physical contact risks being misunderstood and it may result in staff being vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate professional behaviour.

In all service areas where physical contact occurs it must only take place within the context of Outdoor Education, sport or PE, and with the young person's agreement. The limits and boundaries for physical contact between staff and young people should be fully described and documented.

When working with young people where physical contact is an integral part of the activity, staff should discuss the subject regularly at staff meetings so as to ensure consistency and clarity of approach.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

6. Communication and social media

Organisation staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and should set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside organisation, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at the organisation without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the organisation's online safety policy.

7. Acceptable use of technology

See ICT and Internet Policy

8. Confidentiality

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the organisation, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

This does not overrule staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

9. Honesty and integrity

Staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, handling money, claiming expenses and using organisation property and facilities.

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts from parents must be declared to line managers

Staff will ensure that all information given to the organisation is correct. This should include:

- Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of organisation)
- Qualifications
- Professional experience

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the organisation, the member of staff will advise the organisation as such as soon as reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

10. Dress code

Uniform is provided.

Staff should wear uniform if they are delivering to students

Staff who are not in uniform should dress in a professional, appropriate manner.

Outfits will not be overly revealing. Shorts need to be smart/casual.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Shoes worn by delivery staff must be non-slip, closed-toed, casual shoes or trainers but must not be sandals, flip-flops, or clogs.

11. Conduct outside of work

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the organisation, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the organisation on social media.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the board of trustees. Our board of trustees will ensure this code of conduct is implemented effectively and will ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and deal with any concerns.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

[Staff Capability, Discipline and Grievance Procedure - School.docx](#)

[Online Safety Policy.docx](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy.docx](#)

[Child Protection Policy 2024.25.docx](#)

[Safeguarding Policy 2024.25.docx](#)