

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## September 2024


### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Directors on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Directors on 01.09.24.

It is due for review on 01.09.25 (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature (CEO) .....  ..... Date .....01.09.24.....

Signature (COO) .....  ..... Date .....01.09.24.....

### Version Control

Version	Date	Changes
V1	04/09/23	Original document
V2	01/09/24	Terminology and layout updates.

## 1 Introduction

The following code of conduct has been formulated to allow the Provision to fulfil its functions under the Provision Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (the “Regulations”) in relation to its duty under Regulation 7 to establish procedures for the regulation of the conduct of the staff at the Provision.

To maintain standards and quality, whilst not a mainstream provision, the Directors of Edit Education have aligned this code of conduct to these regulations to support both staff and students.

The code has also been formulated following the recommendation from the DfE stating the need for Provisions to have a “staff code of conduct” (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE Guidance, September 2024).

This code of conduct applies to all employees and volunteers in the Provision. All Provisions and academies are entitled to demand a level of conduct from employees which is of the highest standard. In the case of teachers, it applies in conjunction with Part Two of the Department for Education Teachers’ Standards.

This code aims to establish the usual standard of conduct expected of all employees, whilst also reflects the Core Values and Vision of the Provision. It’s a combination of these regulations, standards and values which formulates the way in which an employee of Edit Education is expected to conduct themselves.

This code of conduct:

- sets out minimum standards of behaviour for employees;
- provides guidelines to help maintain and improve standards;
- aims to protect the reputation of both employees and the Provision;

This code of conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good professional conduct.

## 2 Teacher Standards

The Standards indicate certain values that relate directly to the code of conduct. “Teachers make the education of their students their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.”

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus, creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

As an employee, you must not put yourself in a position where duty and private interests’ conflict and you must not make use of your employment to further your private interests.

The Code consists of General Principles and a General Code of Conduct

- Application and Intent
- Personal Interest

- Staff/Student Relationships
- Gifts and Responsibility
- Sponsorship
- General Confidentiality
- Dealing with the Provision's Money
- Criminal Charges and Convictions
- Other Employment
- Intellectual Property and Copyrights
- Publications and Dealing with the Press
- Equipment and Materials
- Political Restrictions and Neutrality
- Equal Opportunities
- Employment Matters
- Discrimination/Harassment
- Fitness for Work
- Health and Safety
- Attendance
- Smoking
- Mobile Phones
- Dress Code
- Identity Badges
- Disciplinary Rules and Procedures
- Following Instructions

### **3. General Principles**

As an employee of Edit Education, you are expected to carry out your duties in accordance with Edit Education's policies and procedures. The policies are available on the website ([www.editeducation.co.uk](http://www.editeducation.co.uk)) and a physical copy is available in the staff office.

You are expected to uphold the following principles:

- Selflessness: your decisions must be taken in terms of the values and vision of Edit Education and not to gain financial or other material benefits.
- Integrity: you must not place yourself in a situation where your position is compromised.
- Objectivity: all decisions must be made on merit alone.
- Accountability: you must accept accountability for your decisions and actions.
- Openness: you should be as open as possible about all your decisions and actions.
- Honesty: you should declare any private interests relating to your duties and take lawful steps to resolve any conflicts to ensure that public interest is protected.
- Leadership: you must support and promote these principles by example.
- Conduct: you must avoid bringing the Provision, into disrepute (e.g. by the use of social networks, the internet or through conversations with other colleagues or the general public).
- Respect: you must treat others with respect.

## **4. General Code of Conduct**

### **4.1 Application and Intent**

You will be expected to act in accordance with the Code. The Code has been formulated so that you are not left in any doubt as to what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour during your employment. The Code of Conduct places rules and regulations on certain activities and any breach of these prohibitions may lead to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action is conducted in accordance with the Provisions Disciplinary Policy

### **4.2 Personal Interest**

You must not in your official capacity:

- Allow your personal interests to conflict with the Provision's requirements.
- Use your position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
- You must:
- Not disclose information given to you in confidence, or information acquired which is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it.
- Not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- Ensure that your relationships with Students, Parents, Carers, Directors, Staff and any other people with whom you may come into contact within the course of your duties are professional at all times.

### **4.3 Staff/Student 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. If staff members and students must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- This takes place in a public place that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with students outside of Provision hours if possible. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and students. This includes social media profiles. While we are aware many students and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the Provision year, gifts from staff to students are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may be misinterpreted, this should be reported directly to the CEO. There may be occasions when a student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should always remain self-aware in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. If possible Individual work with students should not be undertaken

in isolated areas or rooms, rooms where there are no other staff or areas without viewing panels.

Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality or privacy a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant. All safeguarding issues must be referred to the DSL.

#### **4.4 Gifts and hospitality**

The Provision seeks to maintain the highest standards of conduct and probity in its business. The acceptance of gifts and/or hospitality by employees must be treated with extreme caution. No offer of a gift or inducement, whether made at specific occasions (e.g., at Christmas) or casually, should be accepted when the gift is made by, or indirectly by, a person, firm or organisation which, to the knowledge of the employee, has or seeks to do business of any kind with the Provision which maintains the Provision or to have an interest in its decisions. Gifts made in this way can be put into a raffle or similar to raise money for the Provision Fund or any other charitable endeavours as part of the Provision's SMSC agenda.

The receipt of minor articles, often by way of trade advertisements, which will be used on the Provision's business (e.g., diaries, calendars, office requisites, etc., which are customarily distributed at Christmas and, occasionally, at other times) is acceptable.

If you are in any doubt, you should seek guidance from the CEO or Line Manager before accepting any gifts or hospitality offered. If there is any doubt further advice can be sought via the Board of Directors

Employees should also refrain from making any gifts to external organisations or to the employees of organisations which provide services to the Provision, or which are potential providers of such services.

Employees should refrain from giving personal gifts to students. The Student Reward System provides ample opportunity to praise students for their conduct, behaviour, and work.

#### **4.5 Sponsorship**

Authorisation should be obtained from the CEO before requesting sponsorship from employees of the Provision. Where the Provision sponsors an external event or service, you, or any partner, spouse or relative must not directly benefit from the sponsorship.

#### **4.6 General Confidentiality**

You may, in the course of your duties, obtain information which is confidential.

You must not:

- Pass on any information received or obtained through your employment to anyone who is not entitled to have that information.
- Use information for personal advantage.

You must:

- Work within the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Observe the Provision's procedures for the release of personal information held about other employees or members of the public.
- You must not misuse your position by seeking information which you do not need to know to carry out your duties.

Examples of abuse of confidence would include:

- Ill-considered gossip whether with colleagues or outsiders which may be misconstrued and re-quoted.
- Exploitation of confidential information for personal gain.
- Premature and/or unauthorised disclosure to other parties of policy proposals, with the object of generating adverse publicity e.g. to the press, interest groups.

Please see the Provision's GDPR Policy for further information.

#### **4.7 Dealing with the Provision's Money**

You must:

- Ensure that public funds are used in a responsible and lawful manner.
- Strive to ensure value for money to the Provision and to avoid legal challenge to the Provision.
- Ensure compliance with the Provision's Finance processes – where in any doubt, please consult the COO.

#### **4.8 Criminal Charges and Convictions**

In accordance with the Independent Provision Standards Regulations, the Provision requires all applicants to disclose criminal convictions, whether committed in the UK or elsewhere.

You must:

- Notify the Provision in writing immediately if you are subject to a caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation, pending prosecution or are charged with any criminal offence or if convicted of any criminal offence, this includes cautions.
- If charged with an offence, advise the Provision as your employer immediately after you are charged (i.e. next working day).

It should be noted that the term 'conviction' includes a finding of guilt, regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded. Failure to notify the Provision in either case will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

All staff and volunteers are required to notify the COO (or in the case of the COO the CEO) immediately if they are found to be by the Police/Court to have engaged in criminal activity or are under investigation by the Police or Social Services, as this may impact on their ability to work with children.

#### **4.8 Other Employment**

In some instances, your contract of employment may:

- Prevent you from undertaking other employment without the written permission of the COO/CEO
- It is important that you ensure that any additional employment does not conflict with the interests of the Provision or affect your ability and credibility to do your job.
- Where you have more than one job, both the Provision and your other employer(s) are responsible for ensuring that the 48-hour week is complied with. You should therefore ensure that you inform the COO about any work you undertake for other employer(s). (You may opt to work more than 48 hours per week and should you wish to do so, you will need to complete the form 'Working Time Regulations Opt-Out Agreement' under Supporting Documents and submit it to the COO).
- You must ensure that Provision time and equipment are not utilised in connection with any other employment.
- If in doubt, the best thing to do is to discuss the circumstances with your manager.

#### **4.9 Intellectual Property and Copyrights**

All intellectual property rights, (that is copyright, design rights and the right to patent inventions) relating to anything created or invented by you in the course of your duties belongs automatically to the Provision, unless otherwise agreed, you cannot exploit the rights to any such thing without written permission from the Provision.

#### **4.10 Publications and Dealing with the Press**

You must not:

- Publish any material which comments on the activities, policies etc. of the Provision without the consent of your manager.
- Make comments to the press or media unless specifically authorised to do so.

Where requests for comments are received, they should be passed on to the COO or CEO. Where you wish to publish an article unconnected with the Provision then the article must not link you to the business of the Provision or your professional role and responsibilities.

#### **4.11 Equipment and Materials**

You must:

- Not use the equipment and premises of the Provision or of other places where you work during your contract of employment for unauthorised purposes.
- Only make personal telephone calls and emails when necessary and within reason and during designated break periods, unless in an emergency.
- Only use the internet for personal use in your own time.
- Follow the internet usage policy.

For further information relating to the authorised and unauthorised use of equipment please see the Provision's e-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy. Staff who are loaned ICT or other equipment by the Provision (for example laptops, computers, iPads, iPods, cameras or phones) must adhere to all aspects of the e-Safety Policy.

This must be the case wherever the equipment is being used as it always remains the property of Edit Education.

Staff are required to take proper care of the equipment whilst in their possession and will abide by the requirements of the Provision's insurance policy and GDPR policy with regard to protecting the equipment and its contents from loss or damage.

Staff must also agree that, should the equipment be lost or damaged, the Provision may recover the cost for replacement or repair of the equipment from the staff member concerned.

All staff are expected to sign the staff ICT and equipment loan agreement once an allocation has been made and the equipment received.

#### **4.12 Political Restrictions and Neutrality**

There are a number of posts that are politically restricted. These fall into two broad categories:

- Specified posts
- Sensitive posts

If you are in a politically restricted post then this will be indicated in your contract of employment and you are restricted in certain political activities.

Political Neutrality - the Provision will not concern itself with the political beliefs of individuals however you must not allow your own political beliefs to interfere with the work of the Provision. You may not display party political posters, including election material, in any place of work.

#### **4.13 Equal Opportunities**

The Provision is committed to the promotion and implementation of equal opportunities both internally and externally. The Provision aims to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with it is treated equally and not in any way disadvantaged by factors which could prevent the implementation of fair policies and operations. For more information about the policy see the Provision's Equality Policy.

The Provision will recognise the differences which exist and will seek to understand the needs of people within the groups which are afforded protection or assistance through this policy.

The Provision expects all its employees to uphold its Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy and to accept the duty not to discriminate, either in employment practices or in the provision of facilities and services by reference to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

#### **4.14 Employment Matters**

If you are involved in making appointments, you must:

- Ensure that such appointments are made based on the candidate's ability to do the job.
- Ensure that your personal preferences should not influence judgements made.
- Declare your interest where you are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with him/her.



#### **4.15 Discrimination, Harassment, and Victimisation**

You must treat all other employees, students, parents, and people with whom you come into contact with courtesy and respect and must not make any remarks or gestures relating to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation which may cause offence.

Any complaint of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation or complaints made on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above, will be taken seriously and will be the subject of a thorough investigation. This could give rise to the implementation of the Provision's Disciplinary procedure, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

#### **4.16 Fitness for Work**

The Provision accepts that alcohol is legally and freely available. You must:

- Ensure that the use of alcohol out of work does not adversely affect your work performance, the health, safety or welfare of yourself or others and does not damage the Provision's image and reputation.
- If you are a Director, consider the options available for managing employees in the above situation and consider if there is a need to make a supportive referral to the services of Occupational Health.
- Not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work.
- Ensure that the use of any of them out of work does not adversely affect the work performance and safety of yourself or others and does not bring the Provision into disrepute.
- If taking medication you must seek the advice of your doctor to ensure that such medication will not impede your ability to do the job (e.g. operate machinery).
- Inform your Line Manager of any situations where a risk to yourself or others may arise because of this.
- If you are a Director, consider the options available for assisting employees who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose levels of performance has been impaired. In these circumstances a risk assessment should be undertaken.

#### **4.17 Health and Safety**

You have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself and to cooperate with management under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. These responsibilities are identified in the Provision's Health and Safety policy.

You are required to act at all times in accordance with this policy and generally to act in such a way to ensure your own safety and that of others. Any action which potentially puts at risk the health and/or safety of yourself or others will be viewed seriously and may result in disciplinary action may be taken.

#### **4.18 Attendance**

The core hours at Edit Education are 9.00am – 3.00pm. It is expected that you are available for work during these hours. The procedures for informing the Provision about your absence are contained in the Staff Handbook.

#### **4.19 Smoking and Vaping**

The Provision is a non-smoking organisation. With this in mind you are not permitted to smoke or vape in any of the Provision's offices, or any other building or grounds, owned or occupied by the Provision, at any time. Smoking or vaping whilst on the Provision's premises may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **4.2 Personal Mobiles**

- Employees are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time where children are present (excluding break times) unless in the case of an emergency or agreed in advance with the CEO/COO.
- Staff should ensure that mobiles are always set to silent whilst in classrooms with children. They should not be left on display.
- Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their personal mobile phones.

#### **4.21 Work Mobiles**

Some Provision staff will be allocated a mobile phone to go about their business. This phone needs to be on throughout the working day to ensure calls, text messages and emails can be taken and responded to.

#### **4.22 Dress Code**

There is a general expectation that dress will be appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the job. This also applies to Off-Site activities and as representatives of the Provision smart dress is required at all times unless the activity is of a physical nature.

The Provision values and welcomes the ethnic diversity of its workforce and therefore dress codes will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity ensuring that employees are free to observe them. Where there is a clear business case or a health and safety reason, the Provision may introduce appropriate dress codes to suit the services provided.

#### **4.23 Identity Badges**

Employees issued with identity badges should wear them at all times. This is particularly important if you visit the public in their homes. Where managers decide that it is not practical to wear identity badges then you should have them available for inspection at all times. As the badge also acts as an access pass you must alert a member of the administration team that it is lost to prevent unauthorised access to the building.

### **5 Disciplinary Rules**

The Provision has a disciplinary procedure which is detailed in the Disciplinary Policy. The disciplinary procedure is concerned with instances of alleged misconduct, either ordinary or gross. It is anticipated that the vast majority of

breaches will be of a minor nature and that they can be resolved without recourse to a formal procedure. Some breaches will be more serious or there may be circumstances where there is repetition of a minor breach. In such circumstances the matter will be formally investigated and progressed under the formal procedure.

The Provision also has a separate capability procedure which provides a framework for managers and employees to cope with issues relating to performance. The underlying intention of the Procedure is to give the employees who are falling below the established acceptable standards the opportunity to improve.

## **6. Following Instructions**

You are expected to follow all reasonable and lawful instructions by a person with the authority to issue such instructions unless:

- There is a danger to a person's health and safety.
- A conflict of interest may exist.
- It does not comply with Provision's policy and practice.

CEO and COO must be able to justify their instructions and decision in line with their delegations, authority, and Provision policy and procedures, and be open and respond promptly to constructive questions.

## **7. General Data Protection Regulations**

The GDPR protects personal data which relates to living identifiable individuals and deals with the way in which personal information is collected, held, recorded, and used.

It works in two ways:

- It gives you and other data subjects certain rights.
- It states that those who record and use personal information must be open about how the information is used.

## **8. Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (2000) gives significant rights of access to information held by all public authorities. All Freedom of Information requested should be processed by the CEO or COO.

## **9. Internet Usage**

Internet Users must not display, access, use, extract, store, distribute, print, reveal or otherwise process any kind of image, document or other material which is sexually explicit or offensive in any other way, on any Provision system. This activity would be a violation of the Provisions policies, particularly those relating to conduct and discrimination.

You must not post any comments, photographs, images, or conversations on social networking websites which may bring you or the Provision into disrepute. Security settings should be maintained at the highest level to prevent members of the public seeing any of your personal information. Further information regarding the appropriate use of technology can be found in the E Safety and Acceptable Use Policy.