



## **Activity Junction LTD**

# **Personal and Professional Boundaries Policy**

Activity Junction reviews all policies on a regular basis to demonstrate good practice, regulations and legislation changes as required.

# **1. Policy Statement**

Activity Junction Ltd is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for children, young people, vulnerable adults, families, and staff. This policy sets out the importance of maintaining personal and professional boundaries to ensure respectful, appropriate relationships and prevent any risks of harm, exploitation, or misunderstanding.

All staff, volunteers, and contractors are expected to maintain clear boundaries at all times while working with individuals, families, and other stakeholders.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that staff, volunteers, and contractors understand their professional responsibilities.
- Prevent situations that may result in harm, exploitation, or the perception of inappropriate relationships.
- Protect both staff and service users from potential conflicts or misunderstandings.
- Promote an environment of mutual respect, trust, and professionalism.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone representing Activity Junction Ltd in any capacity, including those working directly with children, young people, vulnerable adults, and families.
- All interactions, whether face-to-face, online, or via phone or email.

### **4. Personal Boundaries**

Personal boundaries refer to the physical, emotional, and psychological limits that individuals establish to protect themselves from over-involvement or harm. Staff, volunteers, and contractors are expected to:

- Respect personal space: Avoid physical contact with individuals unless it is necessary for safety or well-being (e.g., helping a child with mobility issues or preventing injury).
- Respect privacy: Never intrude on the personal lives of individuals outside of the professional context, including social media or personal matters.
- Maintain confidentiality: All personal, sensitive, or private information shared in the course of work must remain confidential, except where disclosure is necessary for safety, safeguarding, or legal reasons.
- Emotional boundaries: Avoid forming overly close personal relationships with individuals you are professionally working with, as this may lead to biased or inappropriate decision-making.

## **5. Professional Boundaries**

Professional boundaries refer to the appropriate limits set within a working relationship to maintain a safe and ethical environment for all parties involved. Staff and volunteers are expected to:

- **Maintain appropriate conduct:** Always behave in a manner consistent with the values of Activity Junction Ltd. Treat everyone with respect and dignity, and avoid any behavior that could be seen as inappropriate, discriminatory, or offensive.
- **Keep relationships professional:** Maintain a clear distinction between professional duties and personal relationships. For example, avoid socialising with service users outside of the work context unless it is part of an organized event.
- **Avoid conflicts of interest:** Do not allow personal relationships or interests to influence professional judgment. If conflicts arise, staff should disclose them to management for proper resolution.
- **Maintain transparency:** Communicate openly and professionally with parents, carers, colleagues, and external agencies, and provide clear, honest information about your role and responsibilities.

## **6. Boundaries in Specific Contexts**

### **6.1. Communication**

- **Use appropriate language:** Always use professional and respectful language in written and verbal communication.
- **Online interactions:** When interacting with service users or their families online (e.g., via social media, emails, or virtual meetings), ensure that the conversation is strictly related to work and that the platforms used are secure and appropriate.
- **Personal phone numbers:** Do not share personal phone numbers with service users or their families unless there is a specific need for it (e.g., emergency contact).

## **6.2. Physical Boundaries**

- Physical contact: Only engage in physical contact that is necessary for the individual's safety, comfort, or well-being. Always explain your actions beforehand and respect personal space. For example, guiding or assisting a child or vulnerable adult may be necessary, but always ensure consent and appropriateness.
- Transportation: Staff should avoid transporting children, young people, or vulnerable adults in personal vehicles unless explicitly agreed upon by management, with clear consent from parents/carers and in line with safety procedures.

## **6.3. Emotional Boundaries**

- Emotional support: Provide appropriate emotional support when required, but avoid becoming overly involved in the personal lives of service users. Keep a professional distance while offering empathy and support.
- Avoid favoritism: Ensure that all individuals are treated equally and fairly, regardless of personal relationships or feelings.

## **7. Breaches of Boundaries**

Any violation of personal or professional boundaries may result in disciplinary action. Serious breaches, such as inappropriate physical contact, exploitation, or abuse, will be reported to relevant authorities and could lead to termination of employment or legal action.

### **Types of breaches may include:**

- Inappropriate or excessive physical contact.

- Making personal requests or offering personal services (e.g., loans or gifts).
- Engaging in inappropriate social media communication.
- Sharing personal contact details outside of work.

## **8. Handling Complaints and Concerns**

If a staff member, volunteer, or service user has concerns or believes that boundaries have been crossed, the following steps should be taken:

- Step 1: Inform the individual involved (if safe to do so) that their behavior or actions are inappropriate.
- Step 2: Report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or relevant supervisor.
- Step 3: A formal investigation will be carried out if necessary, following our Complaints and Safeguarding Policies.

## **9. Training and Support**

Activity Junction Ltd provides training for all staff, volunteers, and contractors on personal and professional boundaries. This training will cover topics such as:

- Understanding the importance of boundaries in safeguarding.
- Practical guidance on how to maintain appropriate interactions.
- How to report and address concerns about boundary violations.

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any major incident or legislative change.

Date of last review: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Next review due: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Approved by:

Emma Devine – Director

Activity Junction Ltd