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# Project WordPlay CIC

## Code of Conduct

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<b>Document title</b>	Code of Conduct
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<b>Approved by</b>	Co-Directors
<b>Date approved</b>	April 2026
<b>Review date</b>	April 2027
<b>Applies to</b>	All staff, freelancers, volunteers
<b>Contact</b>	hello@projectwordplay.co.uk

### At a glance — our core expectations

- Be safe: always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in our care
- Be respectful: treat everyone — participants, colleagues, partners — with dignity and kindness
- Be professional: represent Project WordPlay honestly and with integrity at all times
- Be boundaried: maintain appropriate professional boundaries with participants
- Be responsible: take ownership of your actions and speak up if something is wrong

## 1. Introduction

Project WordPlay CIC exists to create safe, creative, and inclusive spaces where children, young people, and communities can connect, communicate, and grow. Everything we do is built on trust — the trust of the young people we work with, their families, our school and community partners, and our funders.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour we expect from everyone who represents Project WordPlay CIC, in any capacity. This includes:

- Co-Directors
- Employed or contracted staff
- Freelance practitioners and teaching artists
- Volunteers

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By working with us, you agree to uphold this Code of Conduct. It should be read alongside our Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, and any role-specific guidance you receive.

## 2. Safeguarding and child protection

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our absolute priority. Everyone working with us must:

- Complete any safeguarding training required by Project WordPlay before working with participants
- Be familiar with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Know who the designated safeguarding lead is and how to contact them
- Report any safeguarding concern immediately — never wait, never investigate alone
- Never keep a safeguarding disclosure confidential — you must always pass it on
- Be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you are ever unsure what to do, the answer is always to speak to a Co-Director straight away.

## 3. Professional boundaries

Maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries with children and young people protects them — and it protects you. All staff, freelancers, and volunteers must:

### 3.1 Physical contact

- Only make physical contact with a child where it is appropriate to the activity (e.g. a supportive hand on the shoulder), proportionate, and in view of others
- Never engage in rough play, tickling, or contact that a child or young person has not clearly welcomed
- Respond immediately and calmly if a child seeks inappropriate physical contact, and record the incident
- Never physically restrain a child except in an immediate emergency to prevent serious harm — seek guidance from a Co-Director before any session if you anticipate this may be needed

### 3.2 Communication

- Do not contact children or young people directly via personal social media, messaging apps, or phone numbers
- All communication with participants should go through the school, parent/carer, or an official Project WordPlay channel
- Do not accept friend requests from participants or their family members on personal social media accounts
- Do not share personal contact details with participants or their families

### 3.3 One-to-one situations

- Avoid being alone with a child in a closed or unobserved space
- Where one-to-one work is necessary (e.g. a brief individual check-in), ensure it is visible to others and as brief as possible

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- If you find yourself alone with a child unexpectedly, move to an observable space or ensure a colleague is nearby

### **3.4 Relationships**

- Do not develop personal or social relationships with participants or their families outside of the programme context
- Do not give gifts to individual children without prior discussion with a Co-Director
- Do not accept significant gifts from participants or their families
- Be mindful that the creative nature of our work can lead to emotional closeness — this is valuable, but must stay within professional boundaries

## **4. Equality, inclusion and respect**

Project WordPlay CIC is built on a belief that every voice matters. We work with children and communities from diverse backgrounds, and we are committed to creating spaces where everyone feels equally valued and included. All staff, freelancers, volunteers, and trustees must:

- Treat every person with dignity, respect, and fairness regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- Challenge and address discriminatory language or behaviour — including jokes or comments that demean others — whether directed at participants, colleagues, or anyone else
- Be sensitive to cultural differences and avoid making assumptions about individuals based on their background
- Never express personal religious, political, or ideological views in a way that could influence or alienate participants
- Report any incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying to a Co-Director

We recognise that many of our participants come from marginalised communities and may have experienced trauma, displacement, or systemic disadvantage. We ask everyone working with us to bring awareness, empathy, and humility to that reality.

## **5. Online and social media conduct**

How we behave online reflects on Project WordPlay CIC and can affect the trust and safety of our participants.

### **5.1 Personal social media**

- Do not post photographs, videos, or identifying information about Project WordPlay participants on personal social media accounts
- Do not make comments about individual participants, their families, or their circumstances on social media
- Do not post content that could embarrass Project WordPlay CIC or bring it into disrepute
- Be mindful that posts made in a personal capacity can still be associated with the organisation

### **5.2 Official Project WordPlay channels**

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- Only post on official Project WordPlay social media accounts with the agreement of a Co-Director
  - Do not post pictures of participants online
  - Do not take pictures of participants with personal devices
  - Do not engage in public debates or disputes on behalf of the organisation without authorisation

## 6. Confidentiality

In the course of your work with Project WordPlay you may become aware of sensitive information about participants, their families, or the organisation. You must:

- Treat all personal information about participants as strictly confidential
- Only share information about participants on a need-to-know basis — and only with the appropriate person
- Not discuss individual participants in public spaces or social situations
- Follow our Data Protection Policy in all matters relating to personal data
- Understand that confidentiality is not absolute: if a safeguarding concern arises, information must be shared with the designated person regardless of any expectation of privacy

## 7. Health, safety and wellbeing

- Arrive for sessions on time, prepared, and fit to work
- Do not work with participants if you are under the influence of alcohol or any substance that impairs your judgement
- Be familiar with the health and safety arrangements for each venue you work in
- Report any accident, near-miss, or hazard to a Co-Director as soon as possible
- Look after your own wellbeing — speak to a Co-Director if you are struggling, and take reasonable steps to manage your capacity
- If you are unwell and unable to attend a session, notify a Co-Director as early as possible

## 8. Honesty and integrity

We ask everyone working with us to be honest and transparent in all their dealings with Project WordPlay CIC and with the people we serve.

- Be accurate and truthful about your qualifications, experience, and capacity
- Never misrepresent Project WordPlay CIC or make commitments on our behalf without authorisation
- Declare any conflict of interest — personal, financial, or professional — to a Co-Director as soon as you become aware of it
- Handle Project WordPlay property, equipment, and funds with care and honesty
- Claim only expenses that are genuine, accurate, and supported by receipts

## 9. Speaking up — your responsibility

We want Project WordPlay CIC to be an organisation where concerns are raised early and addressed openly. Everyone working with us has a responsibility to speak up if they witness or experience something that does not feel right.

This includes:

- Safeguarding concerns about a child
- Concerns about a colleague's behaviour
- Concerns about organisational practice or decision-making
- Experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination

You will not be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith. Where appropriate, our Whistleblowing Policy provides further protection for those who raise concerns about serious wrongdoing.

## 10. Breaches of this Code

Behaviour that falls short of the standards in this Code will be taken seriously. Depending on the nature and severity of the breach, the response may include:

- A supportive conversation and opportunity to reflect
- A formal written warning
- Suspension from sessions pending investigation
- Termination of the engagement or contract
- Referral to the DBS, statutory agencies, or professional bodies where required

Serious or repeated breaches — particularly anything involving the safety of children — will always result in immediate suspension pending a full review.

## 11. Questions and concerns

If you have any questions about this Code, or are unsure how it applies to a specific situation, please speak to Sophie Beckinsale or Nicki Watts at [hello@projectwordplay.co.uk](mailto:hello@projectwordplay.co.uk). We would always rather you asked than assumed.

## 12. Related policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection & Privacy Policy
- Photography, Video & Media Consent Policy
- DBS Checks & Safer Recruitment Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## 13. Policy review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually. The current version will be available at [www.projectwordplay.co.uk](http://www.projectwordplay.co.uk).

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## Appendix A: Code of Conduct — Declaration

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All staff, freelancers, volunteers, and trustees are asked to sign this declaration before beginning work with Project WordPlay CIC. Please return it to [hello@projectwordplay.co.uk](mailto:hello@projectwordplay.co.uk) or hand to a Co-Director.

<b>I have read, understood, and agree to follow the Project WordPlay CIC Code of Conduct.</b>	
<b>Full name:</b>	<b>Role:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

*A signed copy will be retained on file in line with our Data Protection Policy. You will be asked to re-sign when the Code of Conduct is updated.*