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**Code of Conduct**

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| **Written by:** | **Rob Stevenson** | **Date: December 2024** |
| **Last reviewed on:** | **New** | |
| **Approved by:** | **A.Powell** | |
| **Next review due by:** | **December 2025** | |

**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 provision is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Many of the principles in this code of conduct are based on the [Teachers’ Standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards), although some of the staff are unqualified teachers or support workers.

Provision staff have an influential position in the provision and will act as role models for learners by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour.

We expect that all staff will act in accordance with the personal and professional behaviours set out in the Teachers’ Standards.

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

Our ethos centers around our mission,

*to nurture well-being, build trust and develop independence; to be successful in life.*

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 provision and its learners.

**Legislation and guidance**

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2), 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/learner relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

**General obligations**

Staff set an example to learners. They will:

* Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
* Never use inappropriate or offensive language in provision
* Treat learners 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 learners’ vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
* Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
* Adhere to the [Teachers’ Standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards) \*

**Safeguarding**

Staff have a duty to safeguard learners 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 learner.

Our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are available in the staff meeting room, from the Management Team office and on our website and shared TEAMs drives. New staff will also be given copies and signposted to platforms.

**Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section is based on ‘Section 1: Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold’ in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the provision, 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 provision

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 headteacher, or the chair of governors or the proprietor, where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

**Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a learner 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 learners

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 policy. 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. This is available in the staff meeting room, from the Management Team office and on our website and shared TEAMs drives. New staff will also be given copies on arrival.

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

**Whistle-blowing**

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that it is “in the public interest” to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

* Learners’ or staff members’ health and safety being put in danger
* Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
* Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or provision procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the proprietor.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include names of those committing wrongdoing, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising a concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

For our provision’s detailed whistle-blowing process, please refer to our whistle-blowing policy.

**Staff-learner relationships**

Staff will observe proper boundaries with learners 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 learners 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 learners outside of provision hours, if possible, if there has been any sole contact this should be reported to the Management Team within 24 hours.

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

While we are aware many learners and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the provision year, gifts from staff to learners are not acceptable, unless as part of the provision’s rewards policy.

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

**Communication and social media**

Provision staff’s social media profiles should not be available to learners. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, its suggested that they should not use their full name, as learners may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead, and ensure that public profiles are set to private.

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

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

Staff should be aware of the provision’s online safety policy.

**Acceptable use of technology**

Staff will not use technology in provision or belonging to the provision to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, viewing pornography or other inappropriate content.

Staff will only use personal mobile phones for communication with staff and each other, while on the Higher Farm Education site. Laptops and provision equipment are not for personal use, in provision hours or in front of learners. Staff will use designated digital devices to take photographs of learners for educational or promotional purposes.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the provision IT system. Staff must adhere to the internet acceptable use policy.

**Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the provision, staff, learners and their parents/carers.

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 learner has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

**Honesty and integrity**

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

Staff will not accept bribes. Gifts that are worth more than £100 must be declared and recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

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

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

Where there are any updates to the information provided to the provision, the member of staff will advise the provision 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.

**Dress code**

Staff will dress in appropriate clothing for the Equine Centre, which meets health and safety standards.

Outfits will not be overly revealing, and we ask that tattoos are generally covered up, unless discrete (this will be at the headteacher’s discretion). Tattoos that could be deemed offensive must always be covered.

Clothes will not display any offensive or political slogans.

Staff will dress appropriately for external professional meetings.

Staff jewellery will be in line with the expectations of the working environment.

Consideration must be given to the length and style of nail, to allow staff to complete tasks safely.

**Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the provision, or the education 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 provision on social media.

**Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually, but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the headteacher.

Our proprietors 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.

**Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

* Staff disciplinary procedures, which will be used if staff breach this code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as misconduct and gross misconduct
* Child protection and safeguarding
* Online safety
* Whistle-blowing