

Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)

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Contents

	Page
General Principles	3
Data Protection	3
Covid-19 (Coronavirus)	3
Consistency of Treatment and Fairness	3
General Responsibilities at Work	4
Setting an Example	4 & 5
Hours of Work and Attendance	5
Honesty and Integrity	5
Harassment at Work	5
Sexual Harassment	6
Conduct Outside of Work	6 & 7
Alcohol, Drugs and Medication at Work	7
Smoking	7
Domestic Abuse	7
Health and Safety at Work	7 & 8
Use of Mobile Phones and Other Devices	8
Social Media Usage	9 & 10
Safeguarding	10
Childcare Disqualification	10 & 11

General principles

The Outdoors Group Ltd. (TOG) employees are in a unique position of influence and trust and must adhere to behaviour that models the highest possible standards for all the service users within the provisions provided by the company. As a member of TOG, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the company, whether inside or outside working hours.

In performing their duties, employees are required to act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity. The Company's standards of behaviour are set out in this 'Code of Conduct' and is aimed to help staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff who are employed by the company, including the Company Directors.

This document should be read alongside the Company's **Employee Handbook** and the Company's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**. Whilst it is hoped that this is never the case, all employees should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal.

Associated Legislation & Guidance

Equality Act 2010

2006 Childcare Act and 2018 Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations

Associated The Outdoors Group Documents

Employee Handbook

Data Protection Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Data Protection

The organisation processes personal data collected in line with the expectations of employees as set out within the Code of Conduct in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. Data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes outlined with the Code. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of systems within the Company which support safeguarding and any temporary amendment to these should be explained to them by senior leaders. It is accepted that professional judgements may need to be made in situations not covered by existing guidance; in such circumstances, staff will always advise their senior colleagues of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Company is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including where the duty to make reasonable adjustments applies.

General Responsibilities at Work

All staff are expected to work within the scope of their contract of employment, carrying out the reasonable instructions of their supervisors, and managers; and to work to the requirements of their job description.

All staff are expected to treat other colleagues, service users and external contacts, such as parents, with dignity and respect.

All staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children and adults, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute.

Staff should not seek to deceive the Company by withholding information, giving false information, or destroying, damaging, or altering any records or documents without proper authorisation.

Staff should not misrepresent the Company in their dealings with others or make any statement on behalf of the Company which they are not authorised to do (for example, giving a reference for a colleague on behalf of the organisation, making statements to the press or other media).

All staff are required to comply with the Company's equality policies in respect of colleagues, learners, service users and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, service users and parents.

All staff are required to respond to all internal surveys that are required by the company to meet its regulatory compliance commitments and due diligence for H&S and Equipment and Software audits.

All staff are expected to attend mandatory Company days, and Training sessions as required during the year.

Setting an Example

All staff who work in the Company set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by learners and other service users. Staff must therefore avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.

All staff must, therefore, demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in order to encourage our learners and other service users to do the same.

Good levels of attendance & punctuality are essential. All staff must be punctual for all timetabled activities, including: lessons, meetings, assemblies and extra-curricular events.

All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

Hours of Work and Attendance

Employees are required to work the hours stated in their contract of employment.

Employees should be at work at the proper start time (unless there is prior agreement to arrive late); agree in advance with their manager any planned absences (for example, a medical appointment); agree with your manager any annual leave, special leave or other leave of absence before they take any time off or book any holidays (except in cases of bereavement leave or emergency leave).

All employees are required to follow the Company's absence reporting procedure if they are absent due to sickness.

Honesty and Integrity

Staff must maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Company property and facilities.

In all cases, it is not enough to avoid actual dishonesty. Employees should at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.

Harassment at Work

All employees should work in an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The school will not tolerate any employee being subjected to bullying or harassment and any complaints of perceived bullying and harassment will be considered seriously and investigated accordingly.

Examples of actions that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Exclusion or victimisation
- Insulting/offensive comments or language
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Inappropriate sexual advances
- Ridiculing or demeaning an individual
- Abuse or misuse of power which undermines or humiliates an individual
- Abuse of authority and use of threats to coerce others by fear
- Withholding information, removing areas of responsibility without discussion or impeding work performance
- Preventing progression by denying opportunities for promotion and training

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Something can still be considered sexual harassment even if the alleged harasser didn't mean for it to be. It also doesn't have to be intentionally directed at a specific person.

Sexual harassment can happen to anyone in any number of ways, including:

- written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee's appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes
- displaying pornographic or explicit images
- emails with content of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact and touching
- sexual assault

Sexual harassment is unacceptable regardless of a person's position or influence within the school. Any employee who feels they have been sexually harassed, or any employee who feels they have seen sexual harassment take place, can make a complaint of sexual harassment.

If any employee feels that they are being bullied or harassed (including sexually harassed) are encouraged to make a complaint in line with the Company's Grievance, Harassment at Work, or Whistleblowing procedures.

Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation and standing of the school or the employee's own reputation or the reputation of other members of the Organisational community.

If an employee is made aware of a concern being raised against them that alleges that they have engaged in behaviour that could potentially compromise their position within the workplace, they should discuss this with their Senior Leader or HR immediately.

In particular, during the course of employment, criminal offences or types of behaviour that involve violence or possession, or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

If an employee is arrested, convicted, cautioned, charged, or bailed by the Police then they should disclose this to their business area Senior Leader and the HR team immediately at the earliest opportunity. Failure to disclose this information is unacceptable and could lead to dismissal.

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff must not use social media e.g., Facebook, Snapchat etc. with pupils or former pupils (outside of established family or close family friend relationships). Where unsure, staff should seek further guidance from their line manager or safeguarding lead.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

Staff must not discuss or share data relating to children/parents/carers in staff social media groups.

Staff must only use their company/ school email account or school learning platform account when communicating electronically with pupils, parents and colleagues.

Alcohol, Drugs and Medication at Work

Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at work is not permitted.

Alcohol may not be consumed during working hours, including lunchtime and break time.

Employees must also note that many prescribed medications and over the counter medicines can have an adverse effect on the ability to work. Therefore, employees must always check that they can still work safely before taking any drug.

Smoking

Staff are not permitted to smoke on the school premises or grounds. This includes all types of smoking devices and paraphernalia including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, etc.

Smoking is only permitted in designated areas.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a crime. The Company may consider a range of measures to support an employee who discloses living in or dealing with a violent relationship, for example counselling, flexibility around workload.

Employees found to be a perpetrator of domestic abuse may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Health and Safety at Work

Every organisation has a legal duty of care for the health and safety and welfare of its employees. In addition, all employees must take reasonable steps to protect their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work.

Employees have a duty to help prevent accidents and injuries at work by being aware of the policies that apply and complying with them at all.

Employees are expected to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

Throughout the response to the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic all employees are expected to follow the relevant legislation and/or guidance issued by the government, Public Health England, NHS, the DfE as well as the Company's own risk assessments. This applies to both national and local restrictions.

Employees should keep themselves up to date via the following website links:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Employees should behave in a manner, both inside and outside of the workplace, that does not put themselves, colleagues, or pupils at unnecessary risk of contracting or transmitting the virus. Where appropriate, failure to follow specific guidance or instruction in relation to the management of coronavirus may be considered a disciplinary matter and investigated accordingly.

Use of Mobile Phones and other Devices

Communication with children and vulnerable adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.

Employees should not share any personal information with a child, or young person and should not use their personal mobile to communicate with any young person or on a personal level or to take photographs/videos of pupils/students.

The Company will provide devices such as cameras and mobile phones rather than expecting staff to use their own (e.g., on school trips).

Staff should ensure that the device is secure (e.g., password/fingerprint protected) so that unauthorised access to data is prevented.

Equipment provided by the Company should not be used for personal use or shared with family members/friends.

Personal mobile phones should be stored securely away from learning environments, and it is highly recommended that mobiles are switched off during work hours and should only be accessed during breaks and lunchtime but not in the presence of young people. This also applies when in meetings with young people and parents.

Employees must not give their personal contact details to children, or young people, including their mobile telephone number.

Employees must inform the line manager immediately if contacted by a young person on a personal mobile.

Social Media Usage

The web and social networking services i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok etc. are all used by children, vulnerable adults, and employees for work related projects or for personal use.

Employees are **personally responsible** for the content they publish on social media, blog or any other form of user-generated media.

Please remember that internet content is never truly deleted or private. This means everything that is published will be visible to the world indefinitely. Employees should be sure that they want what they're posting to be in the public domain with their name on it indefinitely. **If in doubt, don't post.**

Employees should use common sense. If employees are about to publish something that makes them even the slightest bit uncomfortable, they should stop and hold off. Again, if in doubt, don't post.

Employees are advised to keep profiles safe by not showing their job title, place of work or work/home email address. Employees should be cautious declaring their status as young people may challenge them i.e., online dating. Employees should not befriend children/young people where their only relationship is one formed through an employees' professional role.

Employees should not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person.

No photography of pupils/students, vulnerable adults or staff taken at school/workplace or on social occasions connected to the workplace should be displayed on any social networking site.

Employees must avoid airing their personal grievances about work on social media. This has the potential to damage the reputation of the school and could involve disciplinary action. If an employee does have an issue or grievance they want to raise, this should be done internally so it can be properly addressed.

Employees should ensure that they manage and understand the privacy settings on their social media.

Employees must not share confidential material on their private social media channels.

Employees are expected to respect their audience.

This goes without saying, but employees must not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace.

Employees must not use their company email address to sign up to social media sites. Internet use during working hours is strictly for business not personal use.

Any form of personalised social media networking that is found to reveal confidential information about the school, information relating to a pupil or student, attacks on or abuse of a colleague or 'customer' of the Company/School, or constitutes a conflict of interest, or is in breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's

responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children.

To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSIE), there is the expectation that low level safeguarding concerns are raised in a timely manner with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

It is important that all adults working with children and vulnerable adults understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust.

All staff should behave in a manner consistent with the principles, guidance and standards outlined within the Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment consortium adapted and updated from original DfE document), and the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated, and where appropriate, failure to follow these standards could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

All employees are expected to read, understand, and sign the Company's latest **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Childcare Disqualification

There are many reasons why someone may be disqualified under the 2006 Childcare Act and 2018 Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations. Where an employee meets any one of the criteria and works in a relevant setting for the purpose of this legislation, they must discuss this with the HR team.

The criteria for disqualification under the 2006 act and the 2018 regulations include:

- inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List
- being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults which are referred to in regulation 4 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the 2018 regulations (note that regulation 4 also refers to offences that are listed in other pieces of legislation)

- certain orders made in relation to the care of children which are referred to in regulation 4 and listed at Schedule 1 of the 2018 regulations
- refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare (except if the refusal or cancellation of registration is in respect of registration with a child minder agency or the sole reason for refusal or cancellation is failure to pay a prescribed fee under the 2006 act (regulation 4(1) of the 2018 regulations)), or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering, as specified in paragraph 17 of Schedule 1 of the 2018 regulations
- being found to have committed an offence overseas, which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 regulations if it had been committed in any part of the United Kingdom

The above list is only a summary of the criteria that lead to disqualification. Further details about the specific orders and offences, which will lead to disqualification, are set out in the 2018 regulations.

If they are unsure whether they are covered by these regulations, employees must discuss this with the Head of People and Wellbeing.

If during the course of their employment any of the above criteria does become applicable to an employee, it is their duty to inform the Head of People and Wellbeing as this may affect their suitability to work in their setting.

As schools are prohibited from employing a disqualified person it is the responsibility of employees to inform the Headteacher or the Head of People and Wellbeing of any change in their circumstances which could change their suitability, failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.