

Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)

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Introduction

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.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to:

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

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.

Related Policies

- [Employee Handbook](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#).
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Equality Opportunities Policy](#)
- [Substances and Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#).
- [Camera and Mobile Phone Policy](#).
- [Online Safety Policy](#).
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 \(KCSIE\)](#),
- [Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblowing policy\)](#).

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 Opportunities Policy](#) in respect of colleagues, students, 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, 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 should 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.

All staff must, therefore:

- Demonstrate the highest standards of conduct 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.
- 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)
- Follow the Company's [Absence Reporting Procedure](#) (in the Employee's Handbook) 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 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 does not 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 Policies](#).

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 organisation's 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 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). When 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.

Substances, Alcohol, Drugs and Medication at Work

Please refer to the [Substances and Alcohol Policy](#) for guidance on these areas, including smoking and vaping.

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. Everyone should be familiar with the [Health and Safety Policy](#).

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, which 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. Employees should be familiar with the [Camera and Mobile Phone Policy](#).

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. Everyone should be familiar with the [Online Safety Policy](#).

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.
- Use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person.
- Air 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.
- Not share confidential material on their private social media channels.
- Use their company email address to sign up to social media sites. 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.
- Use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace.

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

Employees are expected to respect their audience.

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 encounters children and their families and carers have 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, always, 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).

For the purposes of this policy, a low-level concern is defined as any concern had about an adult's behaviour towards, or concerning, a child that does not meet the harms threshold (see below) or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral at the time of its reporting.

Low-level concerns refer to behaviour on the part of a staff member towards pupils that is considered inappropriate in line with statutory safeguarding advice.

Low-level concerns are differentiated from concerns that can cause harm. The harms threshold is the point at which a concern is no longer low-level and constitutes a threat of harm to a child.

This threshold is defined as accusations that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, including behaviour that has happened outside of school.

While low-level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children. The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of recognising concerns before they escalate from low-level to serious, wherever possible. Further information about expectations about safeguarding can be found in the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

Roles and responsibilities

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 and the most recent version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Staff will ensure that they pay due regard to the fact that:

- they are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority, and influence in relation to pupils.
- There is a significant power imbalance in the pupil-staff dynamic.
- There are more stringent expectations on their behaviour regarding pupils due to their position as a public professional.

Staff will remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, regardless of the phase and year group they are at within the school, are children by law. Resultantly, staff will ensure that they do not assume maturity on behalf of a pupil and do not engage with pupils as they would with their own peers. Staff will be aware that where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the DSL immediately. Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the DSL include:

- Being overly friendly with children – this could include, but is not limited to, communicating with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with pupils, e.g. conversations that are about a staff member's personal life or are of a sexual nature.
- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling pupils by pet names or terms of endearment, or buying pupils gifts.
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

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

Reporting Concerns

The company will promote a culture in which safeguarding pupils is the uppermost priority, beyond any perceived professional loyalties to colleagues, ensuring that staff are actively encouraged to report concerns, regardless of their relationship with the staff member.

Staff will report all safeguarding concerns they have to the Headteacher/DSL immediately in line with the procedures laid out in the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#). Staff members will report concerns without undue delay. Where the report concerns a specific incident, staff members will report their concerns no later than 24 hours after the incident where possible. Staff members will be aware that concerns are still worth reporting even if they do not seem serious. Staff members will report their concerns to the Headteacher/DSL via The School IT systems.

When submitting concerns, staff will take care to ensure that they observe confidentiality requirements and protect the identity of all individuals to which the concern pertains as far as possible. Staff members may request anonymity when reporting a concern, and the school will endeavour to respect this as far as possible. The school will not, however, promise anonymity to staff members who report concerns in case the situation arises where they must be named, e.g. where it is necessary for a fair disciplinary hearing.

In line with the [Whistleblowing Policy](#), staff will be protected from potential repercussions caused by reporting a genuine concern. Where a low-level concern relates to the Headteacher/DSL, it should be reported to the Co-CEOs responsible for Safeguarding. Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor to work in the school, staff will also be required to report this to the Headteacher/DSL, who will, in turn, inform the employer of the subject of the concern.

Self-reporting

On occasion, a member of staff may feel as though they have acted in a way that:

- Could be misinterpreted.
- Could appear compromising to others.
- They realise, upon reflection, falls below the standards set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

The school will ensure that an environment is maintained that encourages staff members to self-report if they feel as though they have acted inappropriately or in a way that could be construed as inappropriate upon reflection. The Headteacher/DSL and DDSLs will, to the best of their abilities, maintain a culture of approachability for staff members, and will be understanding and sensitive towards those who self-report.

Staff members who self-report will not be treated more favourably during any resulting investigations than staff members who were reported by someone else; however, their self-awareness and intentions will be taken into consideration.

Where the Concern is Serious

The Headteacher/DSL may decide upon evaluation that a concern is more serious than the reporter originally thought, e.g. when viewed in conjunction with other evidence or other concerns made about the same individual. Where this decision is made, the concern will be escalated, and dealt with as an allegation. The Headteacher/DSL will then follow the procedures laid out in the Disciplinary Procedure Guidance.

Where any concerning patterns of behaviour have been identified regarding a member of staff, the Executive Headteacher/DSL will decide on a course of action. Where a pattern of behaviour has become so concerning that it meets the harms threshold, this will be referred to the LADO as soon as practicable.

Records of low-level concerns will not be kept in the personnel file of the individuals to whom the concerns pertain, unless there have been multiple low-level concerns made about the same individual.

Where a concern is thought to be serious and is processed as an allegation, records of this will be kept in staff personnel files.

Where multiple low-level concerns have been made about the same individual, these will be kept together, and in chronological order. Where an allegation is made about an individual who has previously been subject to such allegations, or where a low-level concern is reclassified as a serious concern after meeting the harms threshold, all records of low-level concerns about that individual will be moved to the staff personnel file and kept alongside records of the allegation.

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, 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.

If you are considering raising a concern, please follow the guidance provided on the [Safeguarding and Child Protection policy](#), Raising a Grievance Procedure ([Employee Handbook](#)) or the Company [Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblowing policy\)](#).

You should read these Policies first.

It explains:

- The type of issues that can be raised
- How the person raising a concern will be protected from victimisation and harassment
- How to raise a concern, and
- What the Company will do

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 their employment any of the above criteria does become applicable to an employee, it is their duty to inform the Head of People and Culture 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.