



Code of Conduct

POLICY DOCUMENT 4	
Title	Code of Conduct
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date approved	31 August 2023
To be reviewed	Every 3 years, on legislative changes or in the event of a serious incident
Review history	04 February 2023, 29 March 2022, 14 April 2020, 21 November 2017, 29 March 2022
Owner	Chair of Trustees
Where to be published (website/private)	Website

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The document sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all adults working and volunteering at the Self Managed Learning College (hereafter referred to as “Adult stakeholder”). The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage all community members to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimize the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring. Learning Advisers, staff and volunteers are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students. Therefore, they must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the college.

1.2 The Chair of Governors or delegated person the Code of Conduct Standards in appendix 1, is signed by all Staff, Learning Advisers/Assistants and volunteers (hereafter referred to as “adult stakeholders”) before they have contact with students, and then annually.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 Adult stakeholders are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Adult stakeholder expects adults to treat each other, students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

- They must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.
- They should show fairness in their treatment of children and avoid behaviours such as humiliating students, making jokes at the expense of students, discriminating against or favouring students and sarcasm.
- They must have regard for the ethos and values of the college and must not do or say anything which may bring the charity or governing body into disrepute. Care should be taken by adult stakeholders to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside college and responsibilities within the college. Adult stakeholders should act in accordance with the college’s policies and procedures at all times.

2.2 Adult stakeholders are not allowed to provide services to students or their families (for example paid tutoring) outside the college. Individuals are paid by the charity to provide services in the college and must not misuse their position to attempt to get business for themselves while they have a contract with the college.

3.0 Defining the terms and scope

3.1 This code of conduct is not an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy adult stakeholders are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the students and the college.

4.0 Related Policies

- Safeguarding
- E-Safety Policy

- Off-site Activities & Visits Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure

5.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed as and when the legislation changes or after a significant change in operations of the Charity or a significant incident, but no less frequently than every 3 years.

APPENDIX 1: Code of Conduct Standards

Respect

All adult stakeholders must behave in a courteous and respectful way to one another and to the College students. Behaviour should be free from discrimination and at all times in line with the College's commitment to equality and inclusion. The College has zero tolerance for bullying, harassment or victimisation.

Dress and Appearance

The college recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. Adult stakeholders should, however, dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. Adult stakeholders should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

Smoking, alcohol and other substances

The college is a non-smoking site. Adult stakeholders must not smoke on the premises. Adult stakeholders must not smoke whilst working with or supervising students offsite. Adult stakeholders must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near the college premises.

Relationships with Students

Adult stakeholders must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Adult stakeholders should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Adult stakeholders should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Adult stakeholders must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Adult stakeholders must not develop sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, defines sexual abuse as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Adult stakeholders should be mindful of section 16 of The Sexual Offences Act 2003 which states that it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual

relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.

Adult stakeholders must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student of the college on any social media platform. Adult stakeholders must read the college's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

Infatuations

It is not unusual for students or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards adults who work closely with them. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned. Adult stakeholders should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against themselves. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another adult must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Gifts/Hospitality

Adult stakeholders need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to an adult stakeholder, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift.

Physical Contact with Students

Our main focus is on a strict no-touch policy, and for most Adult Stakeholders this is appropriate. However, there are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for adult stakeholders to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role (e.g. music tuition). A 'no touch' approach in this sense is impractical for most adult stakeholders and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

In these situations, Adult Stakeholders should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Adult stakeholders should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Adult stakeholders should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Adult stakeholders should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Adult stakeholders should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Adult stakeholders must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.

Extra caution should be exercised where a student is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child or young person increasingly needy and demanding of physical contact and adult stakeholders should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

If an adult stakeholder believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Child in distress

There may be occasions when a student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Adult stakeholders should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

One to one situations

Adult stakeholders working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and adult stakeholders in such situations. Adult stakeholders should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.

Transporting students

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for adult stakeholders to transport students offsite. A designated adult stakeholder should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Adult stakeholders should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Adult stakeholders should ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Adult stakeholders should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seatbelts. Adult stakeholders should never transport students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Prior to transporting students offsite consent must be obtained from students' parent/guardian and Adult stakeholders should be aware that the safety and welfare of the students is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent/carer. For further information, see the Off-site Activities & Visits Policy.

E-Safety

Adult stakeholders should follow the college's E-Safety & Acceptable Use Policies at all times.

Adult stakeholders must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the college or the college community into disrepute. Adult stakeholders should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Adult stakeholders should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Adult stakeholders should exercise care when using dating websites where they could encounter students.

Adult stakeholders should not make contact with students, the students' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow students/family members' account on any social media platform. However, the college acknowledges that adult stakeholders who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Adult stakeholders must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with students' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

Adult Stakeholders will only communicate with students on official college hours, and within college hours. Out of hours contact may be appropriate on official channels providing that the Coordinator and parent/carer has approved.

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to college are the responsibility of the device owner. The college accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

Adult stakeholders must be mindful at all times of the confidential nature of personal data and should not share personal data unless to do so is allowable within the GDPR regulations. Care must be taken at all times not to use personal data other than for the purposes it was provided for.

Photography, video and images of children

Many the college activities involve recording images as part of college activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018 the image of a student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the student, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.

Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Adult stakeholders should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and adult stakeholders should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

Adult stakeholders should remain aware of the potential for images of students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Adult stakeholders should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use.

Confidentiality

Adult stakeholders may have access to confidential information about students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Adult stakeholders must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the student on a need to know basis.

Adult stakeholders should never use confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student.

All Adult stakeholders are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is bullied by another student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure. It must not be discussed outside the college.

Adult stakeholders have a statutory obligation to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a student or that might suggest a student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Adult stakeholders should pass on information without delay in accordance with the college's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Adult stakeholders must never promise a student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the student.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Chair of Governors and only approved adult stakeholders and Governors should communicate to the media about the college.

Compliance

All Adult stakeholders must sign this document to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated, and a copy retained on the Adult stakeholder's file.

Name:

Signed:

Date: