



Dacorum Education  
Support Centre

# Code of Conduct Policy

DESC values the mental health and wellbeing of every member of its community.

Our policies reflect the core values of respect and support for each other in every aspect of life. Our aim is that all in our community, through working together, to feel safe and secure in an environment, which enables and equips every individual to thrive and be respectful of each other's strengths and differences.

**Respect, Aspiration, Resilience**

October 2024

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## **1. Introduction**

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all Centre employees and those acting on behalf of the Centre are expected to observe. All staff are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the learners within the Centre.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Centre. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment are required to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012', in particular relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable, and regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the Centre will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

## **2. Principles**

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all Centre policies and procedures.

Staff must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

All staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.

### **2.1. Setting an example**

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by learners. Therefore, all staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times
- demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our learners to do the same
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

## **3. Safeguarding Learners**

Staff have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education throughout their employment and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.

Staff have a duty to safeguard learners from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard learners includes the duty to report concerns about a learner or colleague to the Centres Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Designated Senior Person (DSP).

The Centre's DSL is Naomi Walker, Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy DSLs are Dustin King, Kathryn Girdlestone, Jade Dixon, Karen Rackley, Faye Ewen, Clare Deacon, Alice Neve and Hannah Messer.

Staff have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure and staff must be familiar with these documents.

Staff should treat learners with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine learners, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of learners, embarrassing, or humiliating learners, discriminating against or favouring learners.

Staff must take reasonable care of learners under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Staff should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns. (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

### **3.1. Low Level Concerns**

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the Centre may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- 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.

## **4. Relationships**

Staff must declare any relationships that they may have with learners, staff, clients, contractors supplies or parents outside of the Centre. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work between colleagues should be declared to the Line Manager where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The Line Manager will treat declarations in confidence in accordance with the Relationships at Work Policy.

Staff should not assume that the Centre are aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 2 and/or 3 to make a declaration.

### **4.1. Relationships with learners**

Relationships with learners must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with learners are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship, or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with learners must be via Centre-authorised mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with learners.

If contacted by a learner by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to their Line Manager immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes learners seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

## **5. Learner Development**

Staff must comply with all Centre policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of learners.

Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of learners.

Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of learners.

## **6. Honesty and Integrity**

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

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

- offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
- if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person.

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure.

For further information see the HCC Anti Bribery Policy for Schools available on The Grid.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Centre must be declared to the Line Manager/Headteacher, with the exception of one off “token” gifts from learners or parents.

Personal gifts from individual members of staff to learners are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received.

Staff must not act on behalf of the Centre unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the Centre will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority. References or endorsements on social media given by other members of staff must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

## **7. Conduct outside of Work**

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

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of the workplace which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a member of staff be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the Centre will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the Centre could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk.

In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question an employee’s suitability or ability to do their role/work in an educational setting.

Staff may undertake work outside the Centre, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Centre, nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the Centre. It is recommended that permission is sought in advance.

- staff must disclose any work outside the Centre or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their employment at the Centre
- if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a staff member’s work outside the Centre (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their employment, they must disclose this immediately to the Headteacher or their Line Manager.

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are learners under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the Centre’s ability to trust the member of staff to maintain professional boundaries with learners at the Centre.

Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

## **8. E-Safety and Internet Use**

Staff must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of work when using information technology. Staff should be aware of the risks to themselves and others.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, the Centre, Centre community or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter learners either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with learners should only made via the use of Centre email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of learners should only be taken using Centre equipment, for purposes authorised by the Centre. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the Centre's procedures on Centre equipment.

Further details on this can be found in the E-Safety and ICT Policy and Acceptable User Agreements.

## **9. Confidentiality**

Where staff have access to confidential information about learners or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the learner.

All staff may at some point witness actions or events which need to be confidential.

For example, where a learner is bullied by another learner (or by a member of staff), once reported through the appropriate Centre procedure, it must not be discussed outside the Centre, including with other staff, learners, parents or carers, in the Centre except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

Staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the Centre's Designated Senior Person any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a learner. Staff must not promise a learner that they will not act on information that they are told by the learner.

Staff are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the Centre, its performance, governance, learner or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher or designated person.

## **10. Dress and Appearance**

All staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promote a professional image, not casual wear.

Staff should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where employees are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, the Centre will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The Centre understand that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some employees to follow a code (for example, if an employee has a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the Centre will discuss with the employee how we can support the employee and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The Centre has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate, by any reasonable standard.

### **11. Compliance**

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated each time the code is amended.



## 12. Appendix 1 - Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the Centre's code of conduct.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Jill Clark.

### 13. Appendix 2 - Relationships with learners outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the Centre are known to learners outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the Centre that they may have with learners.

Employee Name	Learner Name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of the Centre with learners in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a learner outside of the Centre I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

- i do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
- I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the Centre
- no monies come through the Centre at any point, either informally (e.g., via the learner) or formally
- no private tutoring has/will take place on the Centre premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the Centre are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Jill Clark.

### 14. Appendix 3 - Relationships outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby employees of the Centre are known to others connected with the Centre outside of work.

Staff must declare any relationship outside of the Centre that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

Employee Name	3 <sup>rd</sup> party name	Relationship

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct and relationships at work policy, and I am not in breach of these.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the Centre are aware of any relationships.

Full Name

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Current Position

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Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Sara Lalis.

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October 2024