



# **ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre**

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

All staff are expected to read the most recent copy of

- Keeping Children Safe in Education Part one
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff must sign that they have read and understood all of the above.

### **AIMS**

The guidance in this Code of Conduct has been developed to ensure that all adults in ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre are clear about professional boundaries and exercise the highest of professional standards. This includes all paid staff, volunteers and partner organisations.

The code of practice aims to:

- Protect students
- Protect staff by providing clear good practice guidelines
- Provide a uniform approach to working with students
- Encourage a culture of openness, improved communication and sharing of practice.

A code of practice cannot address all issues or cover all eventualities, but gives a very clear indication of the kind of behaviour expected of staff. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to check if they are unclear about acceptable and appropriate professional boundaries and working practices.

This code will be reviewed annually, in the light of new legislation, procedures and learnt outcomes.

## **STAFF RESPONSIBILITY - LOW LEVEL CONCERNS**

It is the responsibility of all staff to share any concerns they have about the behaviour of other staff. This is particularly important if a member of staff feels uncomfortable about the way another member of staff interacts with young people, or a particular individual young person, however vague.

## **PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

We expect that students have the right to the highest levels of integrity and professional practice from the staff who work with them. If a member of staff does not establish clear boundaries, they are putting themselves and young people at risk.

Having professional boundaries means:

- Ensuring subjective feelings do not interfere with professional relationships
- Being consistent in approach, actions and responses
- Maintaining professional relationships in the working environment

## **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

The code of professional conduct is valid for all staff working within ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre. However certain aspects may apply to the Head Teacher or Senior Management Team more than other members of staff because of the nature of the responsibility.

(The following points are not in any order of priority.)

### **Staff Must:**

- Be punctual for their duties in line with directed time
- Provide information requested by the Head Teacher and SLT by given deadlines
- Attend all planned staff meetings unless absence has been agreed in advance with the Head Teacher
- Treat each other and the students with respect, being sensitive to individual rights; and not favour or disfavour an individual unduly.
- Not behave in a racist manner, or make any racist remarks towards or about ethnic minority groups or individuals. Any such incident must be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Present themselves in behaviour, attitude and dress in a professional manner at all times.
- Treat all information given to them about the students as confidential. This information should be exchanged in private and not in the presence of the students or other staff. Such information should not be discussed with the parents of other

students. If a student gives confidential information to a member of staff e.g. about home or family situations, that information should not be disclosed to others, except where the staff member believes that withholding such information could be harmful to the student. In such a situation the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding and Child Protection MUST be informed.

- Respond to parental concerns and complaints appropriately and take action with due regard for Learning Centre policy. All parental concerns must be reported immediately to the Head Teacher or another member of the SLT if they are not available.
- Accept responsibility for ensuring that positive and co-operative behaviour amongst the students is encouraged in all areas of the Learning Centre.
- Not denigrate any other member of staff or act in a way that is harmful to the ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre's reputation.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner with parents and other adults.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity and maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour to enable them to maintain an effective learning environment and also to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession.
- Above all, confidentiality and sensitivity should remain the main priority.
- Staff must NOT discuss other students or any intervention or incident with a student(s) in front of or within hearing of another student(s). Any information must be communicated within a safe place i.e. in an office, closed room, staff room etc.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors must sign in and out at reception and wear a visitor badge. Care must be taken that visitors are not left unsupervised when students and young people are present. This includes visitors to the Learning Centre, parents, contractors etc.

## **DRESS CODE**

In the Learning Centre, dress needs to be appropriate. At all times staff must ensure they dress professionally, wearing appropriate clothing during the academic day. This will vary between roles in the Learning Centre and should be appropriate to the role. Sporting dress needs to be appropriate for any other activity undertaken. For example, whilst swimming, swimwear needs to be appropriate and not revealing. At all times staff must ensure that students are appropriately dressed.

## **INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS**

It is important that staff are aware, at all times, of the way in which they communicate with students. Interactions should be positive and respectful, not negative; and must not be demeaning or belittling. For example, jokes should never be made at the expense of students if they may be hurt or offended by these jokes.

The intended outcome of any interaction with students is to promote their learning and raise their self-esteem. When working with students, staff should never engage in or allow inappropriate language.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Students should feel confident and safe discussing a wide range of issues with adults in the Learning Centre. It is important that staff members treat this information 'in confidence'. Staff cannot offer absolute confidentiality. Professional considerations concerning the safety of a student will override confidentiality. Staff must ensure that students are made aware of this and must always act in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Physical contact between staff and young people should only take place when there is a genuine reason and in relation to a professional role - see also Behaviour Policy in regards to physical intervention.

When working with students, staff should never:

- Engage in horseplay
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Let allegations a student makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted on
- Do things of a personal nature that young people can do for themselves

## **COMFORTING**

It is important for staff to show support through words and body language when comforting students. Hugging students is considered to be unacceptable. However, the student's needs must always be prioritised and in exceptional circumstances, professional judgements should be used. Staff should never physically comfort students in a closed room, unless in the presence of another member of staff.

## **RESPONDING TO STUDENTS' PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Students may initiate physical contact with staff. This may be through excitement, distress or relate to their special needs. This kind of spontaneous action from a student needs to be handled in a way that does not hurt their feelings. The member of staff needs to disengage themselves as soon as possible, and where appropriate, initiate a discussion about appropriate boundaries and roles.

## **RESPONDING TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR FROM STUDENTS**

At times the behaviour of students may be deemed to be unacceptable, particularly if it may endanger others. This needs to be appropriately challenged in line with the Behaviour Policy, by all staff, immediately.

## **VIDEO, PHOTOGRAPHS AND SOCIAL NETWORK**

Video footage and photographs of students must not be taken, published or displayed without prior permission from the student and their parents. Staff should **NOT** take photographs of students on their personal phones.

Staff must not have open access accounts on social networking websites e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc. All staff must adhere to the Staff Social Network Guidance Policy.

## **SUBSTANCES**

Staff need to take a view about whether social activities in their own time could be detrimental to their professional role. These could also be interpreted by ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre as inappropriate, or bring the Lifeskills Learning Centre into disrepute; and are criteria for disciplinary action.

If staff use legal or illegal substances outside of work, but it impinges on work, this becomes a disciplinary matter. For example, if the student sees the use of illegal substances and discusses it, this will undermine the credibility of the Learning Centre as well as exposing the staff member to possible prosecution.

Smoking is not permitted in ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre or staff vehicles that are used for transporting students when necessary. Staff are not allowed to smoke in the company of young people. This also applies during any off-site visit with students.

Staff must not consume alcohol during working hours. Similarly, staff should not drink alcohol immediately before coming to work. Staff must not be at work under the influence of illegal substances.

## **CRIMINAL OFFENCES OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Where a staff member is the subject of a criminal investigation, charge or conviction, the Head Teacher (in consultation with another Director (or nominee)) will investigate the facts before deciding whether to take formal disciplinary action. The Head Teacher and additional Director (or nominee) will not necessarily wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take. A member of staff shall not be dismissed solely because a charge against him or her is pending or because they are absent through being remanded in custody.

The main considerations shall be whether the offence is one that is, in the opinion of the Head Teacher (in consultation with the other Director (or nominee)) liable to make the member of staff unsuitable for his or her type of work or unacceptable to other members of staff, students or visitors; in such circumstances, the Procedure for Gross Misconduct would normally apply.

## **RISK-TAKING**

ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre acknowledges that all young people take risks as a normal part of growing up and it is a tool they use to discover, define and develop their abilities and identity. However, it is important to appreciate the difference between positive or healthy risk-taking (e.g. sports, outdoor pursuits and making new friends) and negative or dangerous risk-taking (e.g. smoking, absconding and shoplifting).

As experienced and responsible adults, ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre staff have an important part to play in supporting students in respect to risk.

Staff need to

- Help students learn how to evaluate risks and anticipate the consequences of their choices;
- Help students identify healthy opportunities for risk-taking. Experience of healthy risk-taking can itself prevent unhealthy risk-taking;
- Be aware of their own patterns of risk-taking. Young people do watch and imitate behaviour of adults around them, whether they acknowledge it or not.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre also recognises that staff will “risk-assess” on an on-going basis, whether on or off site, and make decisions on the basis of those assessments. A full and comprehensive set of Risk Assessments has been developed covering all aspects of the ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre’s provision; including the use of premises, equipment, on-site activities, off-site activities and transportation of students. All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with these as part of their induction and training.


## **GIFTS**

In order to protect all adults involved with ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre, and the reputation of the Lifeskills Learning Centre from accusations of bribery or corruption, staff must take extreme care that none of their dealings, directly, or indirectly, could be deemed as a reward or benefit, in line with the Bribery act 2010.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills Learning Centre will hold a Gifts and Hospitality Register. It is common for appreciative parents and students to register their thanks for the work of staff in the form of a small personal gift at significant times of the year such as Christmas and end of academic year. If these are valued at less than £20 these are perfectly acceptable without the need to refer to senior members of staff, but will still be expected to be logged in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

## POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

This policy will be reviewed every year or earlier should legislative change or other event require it.

SIGNED: ... 

POSITION...DIRECTOR.....

DATE...ENTERED ON SUCCESSFUL REGISTRATION ...

REVIEW DATE...31<sup>st</sup> August 2025...

FOR & ON BEHALF OF

ASPIRE: Lifeskills