

# Code of Conduct for Staff



**Last reviewed on:** May 2025

**Next review due by:** May 2027

## **Aims, Scope and Principles**

At The Right Tuition Company ("RTC") ("tuition company"), this policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all staff to follow.

### **Duty of Care**

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils by staff that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

This policy should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. We aim to ensure our tuition centres are an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

RTC staff have an influential position and will act as role models for pupils by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour. The welfare of pupils and staff is paramount.

We expect all support staff and volunteers to also act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others. All staff working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage. Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism.

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Note that this code of conduct policy is not exhaustive. This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or act in the best interests of the pupils which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the pupils in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

## **1. Legislation and guidance**

In line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education ("KCSIE"), we should have a staff code of conduct policy, which should cover low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing, as well as acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media.

## **2. General obligations**

All staff and volunteers set an example to pupils. They will:

- > Maintain high standards in their attendance and punctuality
- > Never use inappropriate or offensive language in school
- > Treat pupils and others with dignity and respect
- > Maintain the utmost professionalism throughout the school day, ensuring that their own attitudes and behaviours model those that we wish our students to demonstrate
- > Show tolerance and respect for the rights of all others
- > Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- > Not express personal beliefs in a way that exploits pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
- > Understand the statutory frameworks they must act within
- > Adhere to the Department for Education (DfE) Teachers' Standards

### **3. Safeguarding**

All staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard pupils from harm, and to report any concerns they have. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

All staff and volunteers will familiarise themselves with our child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, and the Prevent initiative, and ensure they are aware of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

RTC's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures are available in the office and on our website.

All staff and volunteers know the name of RTC's designated safeguarding lead for child protection – Stephanie Satterley.

#### **3.1 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold**

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the company, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- > Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- > Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- > Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- > Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable for working with children - this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of RTC.

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be Arthur Ponsonby or Stephanie Satterley alongside external support, where either of the above are the subject of the allegation.

#### **3.2 Low-level concerns about members of staff**

A low-level concern is behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- > Being over-friendly with children
- > Having favourites
- > Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- > Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- > Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff members will be supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns are covered in more detail in our safeguarding and child protection policy.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### 3.3 Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter of a sensitive nature. Learning content can sometimes lead to unplanned discussion surrounding such subjects.

Responding to students' questions requires careful judgements and may need the subject to be revisited once you have sought advice from senior leadership. Any concerns staff have over comments made by students should be reported; any comments made by other staff that may be of concern should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team.

Staff should-

- > Not enter into inappropriate or offensive discussions, nor offer non-partisan views.
- > Ensure that in all discussions, staff personal opinions and thoughts are not shared, this can be seen as trying to bias a student's views and would be inappropriate.

### 3.4 Whistleblowing

Whistle-blowing reports wrongdoing that is "in the public interest" to report. Examples linked to safeguarding include:

- > Pupils' or staff's health and safety being put in danger
- > Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutory requirement
- > Attempts to cover up the above, or any other wrongdoing in the public interest

Staff are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. Their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, and their confidentiality will be respected.

Staff should consider the examples above when deciding whether their concern is of a whistle-blowing nature. Consider whether the incident(s) was illegal, breached statutory or RTC procedures, put people in danger or was an attempt to cover any such activity up.

Staff should report their concern to Arthur Ponsonby or Stephanie Satterley. If the concern is about them, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report them to the LADO or any of the bodies named in our whistleblowing policy.

Concerns should be made in writing wherever possible. They should include the names of those committing wrongdoings, dates, places and as much evidence and context as possible. Staff raising concern should also include details of any personal interest in the matter.

## 4. Staff-pupil relationships

Staff will observe proper boundaries with pupils that are appropriate to their professional position. They will act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

If staff members and pupils must spend time on a one-to-one basis, staff will ensure that:

- > This takes place in a public place that others can access
- > Others can see into the room
- > A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place

Staff should avoid contact with pupils outside of school hours if possible.

Personal contact details should not be exchanged between staff and pupils. This includes social media profiles.

While we are aware many pupils and their parents may wish to give gifts to staff, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from staff to pupils are not acceptable.

If a staff member is concerned at any point that interaction between themselves and a pupil may be misinterpreted, or if a staff member is concerned at any point about a fellow staff member and a pupil, this should be reported in line with the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **5. Communication and social media**

RTC's staff's social media profiles should not be available to pupils. If they have a personal profile on social media sites, they should not use their full name, as pupils may be able to find them. Staff should consider using a first and middle name instead and set public profiles to private.

Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any effort to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

Staff will ensure that they do not post any images online that identify children who are pupils at RTC without their consent.

Staff should be aware of the RTC's online safety policy and maintain its expectations.

## **6. Acceptable use of technology**

RTC has a clear policy about access to and the use of the Internet and e-Safety. This must be adhered to at all times. Staff will not use technology in RTC/lessons to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive. This includes, but is not limited to, sending obscene emails, gambling and viewing pornography or other inappropriate content. Using RTC equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material would normally lead to disciplinary action.

Staff will not use personal mobile phones and laptops, or RTC equipment for personal use, in school hours or in front of pupils. They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.

We have the right to monitor emails and internet use on the school IT system.

## **7. Confidentiality**

In the course of their role, members of staff are often privy to sensitive and confidential information about the company, staff, pupils and their parents.

This information should never be:

- > Disclosed to anyone unless required by law or with consent from the relevant party or parties
- > Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- > Used for a purpose other than what the information was collected and intended for

This does not overrule the staff's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where staff believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, as detailed further in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **8. Honesty and integrity**

All staff should maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their role. This includes when dealing with pupils, working with colleagues, claiming expenses and using company property and facilities.

Staff will ensure that all information given to the company is correct. This should include:

- > Background information (including any past or current investigations/cautions related to conduct outside of RTC)
- > Qualifications
- > Professional experience

If there are any updates to the information provided to the company, the member of staff will advise the company as soon as is reasonably practicable. Consideration will then be given to the nature and circumstances of the matter and whether this may have an impact on the member of staff's employment.

## **9. Dress code**

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate for their role. Staff need to be dressed respectably, safely and appropriately for their job role.

At all times, all staff must ensure that their appearance, belongings and clothing-

- ▶ Adhere to the safeguarding policy.
- ▶ Promote positive and professional image.
- ▶ Are appropriate to their role.
- ▶ Are not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or inappropriate.
- ▶ Are free of slogans or excessive branding.
- ▶ Do not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.

## **10. Conduct outside of work**

Staff will not act in a way that would bring the company, or the teaching profession, into disrepute. This covers conduct including but not limited to relevant criminal offences, such as violence or sexual misconduct, as well as negative comments about the company on social media.

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years but can be revised as needed. It will be approved by the owner, Arthur Ponsonby

## **12. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- > [Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)
- > Online safety
- > [Health and Safety](#)
- > [Whistleblowing](#)
- > Complaint