

Staff Code of Conduct

Compass Learning & Skills Centre



1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards and legal expectations for all staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers engaged by Compass Learning & Skills Centre (“the Provision”).

It is underpinned by:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- SEND Code of Practice

This Code applies at all times when staff are acting in a professional capacity.

2. Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. The welfare of the child is paramount in accordance with the Children Act 1989.

This section operates in line with:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

2.1 Duty of Care

Under statutory safeguarding legislation, all staff have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

All staff must:

- Read and sign to confirm understanding of Part 1 (or Annex A, as appropriate) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) annually.
- Read the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in full on induction and annually thereafter, complete the safeguarding questionnaire and sign the declaration to confirm understanding.
- Complete safeguarding induction prior to working unsupervised with students.
- Complete annual safeguarding refresher training and any additional updates issued throughout the year.
- Immediately report safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
- If the DSL is unavailable and there is an immediate risk of harm, contact children's social care or the police directly and inform the DSL as soon as possible thereafter.
- Record concerns factually, contemporaneously, and without delay on the Provision's secure safeguarding recording system.
- Avoid filtering, investigating or delaying concerns; staff must report, not investigate.
- Maintain professional curiosity, particularly in SEMH contexts where behaviour may mask safeguarding risk.
- Understand contextual safeguarding risks including county lines, child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), radicalisation, online harm, peer-on-peer abuse, domestic abuse exposure and serious youth violence.
- Recognise that safeguarding applies to all learners up to age 18 and vulnerable adults where applicable.

Failure to report safeguarding concerns may constitute serious misconduct and, in cases of deliberate concealment, may amount to criminal behaviour.

2.2 Professional Boundaries

Staff must maintain safe and appropriate professional boundaries at all times.

Staff must:

- Maintain clear professional boundaries and avoid over-familiarity.
- Avoid favouritism, "special" relationships or behaviour that could be misinterpreted.
- Not exchange personal phone numbers, email addresses, social media details or private contact information with students.
- Not engage in one-to-one contact outside agreed professional purposes or authorised settings.
- Ensure visibility and transparency when working one-to-one (e.g. doors open, visible panels where possible).
- Avoid transporting students in personal vehicles unless formally authorised, risk assessed and with appropriate parental consent.
- Not give students gifts or personal items unless agreed as part of a recognised reward system and recorded appropriately.

Physical contact must be:

- Appropriate to the age, understanding and needs of the learner.
- Proportionate and in response to a legitimate need.
- In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (reasonable force provisions).
- Recorded promptly where it relates to behaviour management, restraint or intervention.

2.3 Low-Level Concerns

In line with KCSIE 2024:

- All low-level concerns regarding adult conduct (including self-reporting) must be reported immediately to the Head of Provision/DSL.
- Low-level concerns include behaviour that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but does not meet the threshold of harm.
- Concerns will be recorded centrally and reviewed to identify patterns of behaviour.
- Repeated low-level concerns may result in formal action.
- Staff must never assume that someone else will report a concern.

Creating a culture of openness and transparency is essential to safeguarding vulnerable learners in an Alternative Provision setting.

3. Equality, Inclusion and SEND

All staff must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and uphold the Provision's commitment to inclusive practice and equal opportunity.

Staff must:

- Act in accordance with the protected characteristics defined within the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).
- Avoid discriminatory language, stereotyping, or conduct that could constitute direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning for students with disabilities or additional needs.
- Accurately implement provision specified within a learner's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and contribute to reviews where required.
- Ensure teaching, behaviour management and sanction systems are applied fairly and proportionately, taking account of individual SEND needs and vulnerabilities.
- Avoid unconscious bias in expectations, decision-making, disciplinary action and communication.
- Promote dignity, respect and inclusion at all times, particularly for learners with SEMH needs and those from vulnerable or marginalised groups.
- Challenge discriminatory language or behaviour from students or adults immediately and record incidents in line with policy.

- Ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy has been read and understood on induction, re-read annually, and sign the declaration to confirm understanding and compliance.

Failure to meet duties under the Equality Act 2010 may expose the Provision to legal liability. Acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

4. Health & Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and relevant statutory guidance, all staff have a legal duty to safeguard their own health and safety and that of students, colleagues and visitors.

Staff must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Co-operate with the Head of Provision in meeting statutory health and safety duties.
- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to all risk assessments, particularly those relating to construction theory, practical tool use, manual handling and off-site activities.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) where required and ensure students do the same.
- Conduct dynamic risk assessments where circumstances change and stop any activity that presents immediate danger.
- Ensure classrooms and practical spaces are safe, orderly and free from avoidable hazards.
- Report hazards, near misses, unsafe equipment or defective tools immediately to the Head of Provision.
- Not bring personal tools or equipment onto site without prior authorisation and safety checks.
- Only undertake tasks for which they are competent and appropriately trained.

In practical construction sessions:

- Tools and equipment must only be used under direct supervision and in accordance with the relevant risk assessment.
- Students must receive appropriate safety instruction before using any equipment.
- Risk assessments must be read, understood and signed prior to delivery and strictly adhered to.
- Appropriate ratios must be maintained at all times.
- Any accident, injury or near miss must be recorded promptly in the accident log and reported to the Head of Provision.
- Where required, incidents must be reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013).

Failure to follow health and safety procedures may constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action. Serious breaches may result in removal from practical duties.

5. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, staff have a legal duty to ensure that personal data is processed lawfully, fairly, securely and only for legitimate educational purposes.

Staff must:

- Only access, use or share personal data that is necessary for the proper performance of their role (“data minimisation”).
- Process personal data lawfully, ensuring there is a clear legal basis (e.g. safeguarding, contractual duty, public task).
- Keep all personal data secure at all times, whether in electronic or paper format.
- Ensure paper records are stored in locked cabinets when not in use.
- Lock computer screens when unattended and not share passwords or login credentials.
- Not download, transfer or store student information on personal devices, USB drives or cloud storage unless explicitly authorised and encrypted.
- Use Provision-approved systems and encrypted platforms where required.
- Verify the identity of any person requesting personal data before sharing information.
- Share safeguarding information lawfully and proportionately, recognising that data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate information sharing where a child is at risk of harm (as set out in KCSIE).
- Dispose of confidential waste securely using approved shredding or disposal arrangements.

Confidential information must not be discussed:

- In public areas or where conversations may be overheard.
- On social media, messaging platforms or personal email accounts.
- With friends, family members or any unauthorised individuals.
- Outside of professional contexts, including informal discussions.

Any actual or suspected data breach, including lost paperwork, misdirected emails, unauthorised access, or loss/theft of devices containing provision data, must be reported immediately to the Head of Provision or Data Protection Lead.

Failure to comply with data protection requirements may result in disciplinary action and may require reporting to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) where legally required.

6. Professional Conduct and Behaviour

In line with the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the Equality Act 2010, staff are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct at all times.

Staff must:

- Demonstrate honesty, integrity and transparency in all professional dealings, including accurate record keeping, reporting and communication with colleagues, commissioners and external agencies.

- Act as positive role models for students, recognising that behaviour, language and attitudes directly influence vulnerable learners, particularly within an Alternative Provision context.
- Treat all students, colleagues, parents and external professionals with dignity and respect, without discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Use professional, appropriate and non-inflammatory language at all times, avoiding sarcasm, derogatory remarks, swearing, or language that could humiliate, shame or intimidate.
- Follow the Provision's Behaviour Policy at all times, implementing agreed behaviour strategies consistently, fairly and proportionately.
- Apply sanctions and restorative approaches only in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and never impose informal, excessive or degrading punishments.
- Not use physical intervention except where lawful, reasonable and proportionate in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and must record any such incident in line with policy.
- Maintain professional boundaries and avoid confrontational, retaliatory or emotionally reactive responses to challenging behaviour.
- Dress appropriately, safely and modestly for an Alternative Provision setting, ensuring clothing does not display offensive, discriminatory, extremist or partisan political messaging and is suitable for practical activities where applicable.
- Not attend work under the influence of alcohol, illegal substances, or medication that impairs professional judgement or safe supervision of learners.

Staff must not:

- Depart from agreed behaviour systems in a way that creates inconsistency, unfairness or increased safeguarding risk.
- Use de-escalation techniques that are not approved by the Provision.
- Engage in inappropriate online conduct or post content that may bring the Provision into disrepute.
- Accept gifts or hospitality that could influence, or be perceived to influence, professional judgement.

Breaches of this section may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, referral to relevant statutory bodies.

7. Online Safety and Social Media

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, staff must maintain strict professional boundaries online.

Staff must:

- Maintain clear professional boundaries between personal and professional digital identities at all times.

- Not “friend”, follow, message, accept requests from, or otherwise engage with students or former students (under 18) via personal social media accounts, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, or private communication apps.
- Not share personal phone numbers, personal email addresses, or private social media handles with students.
- Only communicate with students via approved Provision platforms and systems.
- Immediately report to the DSL any instance of a student attempting to contact them via personal accounts or private messaging services.
- Ensure privacy settings on personal accounts are set to the highest level and regularly reviewed.
- Not post content that could bring the Provision into disrepute, including inappropriate images, discriminatory language, offensive material, or commentary about students, parents, colleagues or commissioners.
- Not discuss confidential information, safeguarding matters, behaviour incidents or EHCP details online under any circumstances.
- Not record, photograph or share images of students on personal devices. Images must only be taken on authorised devices in accordance with the Provision’s data protection policy.
- Remain politically impartial online when identifiable as a member of staff and must not post extremist, discriminatory, inflammatory or partisan political content that could undermine public confidence or breach the Prevent Duty.
- Report any online safeguarding concern, including cyberbullying, exploitation, exposure to harmful content, or signs of radicalisation, immediately to the DSL.

Failure to comply with this section may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, referral to external agencies.

8. Political Neutrality, Personal Ideology and Extremism

- Staff must not use their professional position to promote or express personal political views, party affiliations, campaigning positions, protest movements, or lobbying activity.
- Staff must not promote personal ideological beliefs (including religious, anti-religious, gender-related, nationalist, anti-government or other belief systems) to students, nor present such views as fact.
- Staff must not display partisan political materials, symbols, badges, or campaign messaging within the Provision.
- Staff must not attempt to influence students’ political opinions, voting intentions, religious beliefs, or social viewpoints.
- Where political or controversial issues arise within the curriculum, staff must present balanced perspectives and facilitate discussion in a neutral, age-appropriate manner in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and the Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Any concerns that a student may be vulnerable to extremist ideology must be reported immediately to the DSL in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

9. Attendance and Fitness to Work

Staff must:

- Attend work punctually and be fully prepared to undertake their duties.
- Report any absence personally by telephone to the Head of Provision/line manager no later than 7:00am on the first day of absence, unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. Text message, email or third-party notification is not acceptable unless agreed in advance.
- State the reason for absence, expected duration (if known), and confirm any impact on scheduled activities (e.g. exams, practical sessions, external visits).
- Maintain appropriate contact during periods of absence and provide regular updates where the absence extends beyond one working day.
- Provide self-certification for absences of up to 7 calendar days and a Fit Note from a GP or medical practitioner for absences exceeding 7 calendar days, in line with statutory requirements.
- Inform the Provision immediately if diagnosed with a condition that may affect the safety of learners, particularly in practical or tool-based sessions.
- Not undertake secondary employment during sickness absence unless medically authorised and declared.
- Ensure they are physically and mentally fit to work, particularly where working with vulnerable learners, supervising practical construction activity, or responsible for safeguarding duties.

Failure to follow absence reporting procedures may be managed under the Provision's disciplinary procedures.

Where staff work with tools, machinery or vulnerable learners, impairment poses serious safeguarding risk, which may amount to misconduct if not reported.

10. Whistleblowing

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998:

Staff have a right and duty to report:

- Safeguarding failures
- Illegal activity
- Financial mismanagement
- Health and safety breaches

Concerns may be raised with:

- The Head of Provision
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Staff will not suffer detriment for raising genuine concerns. See the full whistleblowing policy for more information on this.

11. Allegations Against Staff

All allegations must be handled in line with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Local Authority safeguarding procedures

The case manager (Head of Provision) will:

- Contact the LADO immediately where threshold is met
- Not investigate prior to LADO advice
- Consider suspension where appropriate
- Maintain confidentiality

For more information on reporting allegations against staff, please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026.

12. Professional Development

Staff must:

- Undertake mandatory safeguarding training annually
- Complete Prevent training & an annual refresher
- Undertake H&S training relevant to practical construction delivery
- Keep qualifications current
- Provide the Head of Provision with all relevant qualifications on appointment

13. Breaches of This Code

Breaches may result in:

- Informal management action
- Formal disciplinary procedures
- Referral to DBS
- Referral to TRA (where applicable)
- Referral to LADO
- Termination of contract

14. Declaration

All staff must sign to confirm:

- They have read and understood this Code
- They agree to uphold its standards
- They understand breaches may result in disciplinary action

Signed: _____

Date: _____