Staff Code of Conduct

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

This behaviour code outlines the conduct Next Steps Education Ltd expects from all our staff, contractors and volunteers. This includes trustees, agency staff, interns, students on work placement and anyone who is undertaking duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid. The behaviour code aims to help us protect children and young people from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made. It has been informed by the views of children and young people. Next Steps Education Ltd is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our services has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of staff, contractors and volunteers

In your role at Next Steps Education Ltd you are acting in a position of authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate
- following our principles, policies and procedures, including our policies and procedures for child protection/safeguarding, whistleblowing and online safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to Liz Fancourt

- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures o this includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age
- When working online, recording sessions that you have with children and young people and uploading them to the appropriate folder
- Reporting all concerns about health and safety, whether encountered in our setting(s), a home or community venue used for tuition of mentoring purposes to Sarah Logan.

Children's Rights

Children and young people have a right to:

- be treated fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- be understood as individuals with individual needs
- be respected in regard to differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciated as bringing their own uniqueness to the group/organisation
- be treated fairly, free of discrimination and prejudice
- speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in
- ensure that there is more than one adult within sight or hearing during activities with children and young people (or if online, sessions are recorded)
- if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present.

Respect

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible
- if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable Behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person.
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you. If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Next Steps Education Ltd. We may also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services. If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to Liz Fancourt. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing procedure and safeguarding and child protection procedures.
See Whistleblowing Policy.

Devon LADO

The LADO is the person who should be notified when it has been alleged that a professional or volunteer who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children

The role involves having oversight of investigations into allegations about practitioners which meet the above criteria, ensuring that these allegations or concerns about adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, investigated, and monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way.

The LADO will ask for the voice of the child or young person where appropriate.

The responsibilities of the local authority in relation to the LADO role are outlined in Working Together 2023, statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIC 2022).

There is also useful information on DCC's LADO pages including guidance about steps to consider before a referral is made.

If you want to contact the LADO, please complete the LADO contact form or email childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

You should expect a response within 24 hours.

Last reviewed: 12/6/26 by Liz Fancourt

Next review: November 2026