

Code Of Conduct For All RBAir Staff

Legislation / Guidance that informs this policy:

- Teachers' Standards (Gov.UK 2012 updated 2013)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Educational Settings (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Gov.UK Sept 2019)

Other Red Balloon of the Air (RBAir) policies that should be read in conjunction with this one:

- Complaints
- Data Protection
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff
- Whistleblowing
- Safeguarding
- Lone Working (internal policy)

Statement of Intent

The trustees of Red Balloon of the Air expect that all students will be able to access the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.

It is important, therefore, that staff understand that the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholders sets an example and impacts strongly upon the learning environment, be that 'virtual' or 'real'.

This brief code sets out expected standards of conduct. It applies to all staff, regardless of status. It is not an exhaustive compilation of what staff can and cannot do but it is hoped that it will ensure everyone is clear about the high standards of behaviour expected: what is acceptable and what is not.

The code is binding on all school staff. Breaches of the code and the standards expressed in it could result in disciplinary action, including

dismissal for serious offences. Trustees hope that any such action will not be necessary and that all staff will ensure they read the code and act in accordance with it.

NB *The guidance here applies to all learning settings.*

It is essential that all staff:

- provide a high standard of service in dealings with colleagues; students, parents and other stakeholders whether this is in person, by telephone, letter or email;
- always use appropriate language and never demean, distress or offend others;
- respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity.

All staff should understand that the core rights to:

- *be treated with respect,*
- *feel safe physically and emotionally,*
- *learn*

apply equally to every member of a Red Balloon of the Air community, thus they should seek to ensure that their own rights and those of others are upheld at all times.

Staff should ensure that they have read and understood all pertinent policy documentation, particularly the behaviour policies, (these policies detail appropriate expectations of students and of staff) and the health and safety, 'whistleblowing' and 'dealing with allegations of abuse against staff' policies. These explain clearly how staff should raise concerns about the practice of a colleague and what will happen should a colleague, student, parent or other involved person, lodge a complaint about a staff member.

Core expectations of all staff are that they:

- always ensure the rights of all members of the community are upheld;
- maintain an up to date knowledge of, and comply with, all safeguarding

- / child protection requirements;
- abide by and contribute to health and safety procedures;
- arrive promptly for work (in good time to be prepared to receive students, or, as directed, for start of day meetings);
- arrive in good time for all teaching, or other commitments during the day;
- provide any written documentation as requested by their coordinator / line manager promptly;
- abide by the organisation's data protection policy;
- use RB resources, including any that provide access to the internet, responsibly;
- manage their personal usage of the internet responsibly, particularly any use they make of social networking sites;
- always act in accordance with the law. Use of illegal drugs whilst 'at work' (this includes when attending residential opportunities) may lead to immediate dismissal.

All staff have a 'duty of care':

Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; safeguard children.

All staff have a responsibility to keep students safe / free from harm and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional) and neglect.

Students have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct. The safeguarding culture of an organisation is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and students and behaviour by all adults that demonstrates integrity, care, maturity and good judgement.

It is a core element of Red Balloon of the Air philosophy that staff and students contribute to the community: staff are part of a working team – that team is strongest when all work together and support each other – where there is disagreement, that should be calmly and openly discussed without animosity, and outcomes accepted.

Health and Safety:

The organisation has a health and safety policy detailing the responsibilities of all members of the community: all staff should read, understand and comply with this policy.

All staff have a legal responsibility to contribute to a safe working environment.

Appearance and Dress:

Whilst Red Balloon of the Air makes no absolute stipulations regarding dress, there is an expectation that all staff remember that:

- students look to them as role models;
- nothing should be worn that indicates political bias ;
- nothing should be worn that carries a written inscription that might cause offence;
- students have a right to expect that staff take some care over their appearance at work.

It is accepted that staff working online have a reduced responsibility in this area but if they are to 'appear' online, then the same standards should apply.

Staff working at head office are not required to adhere to any formal dress code, but should remember that visitors may arrive with or without notice, hence dress with this in mind.

Hours of Work and Attendance:

As noted under core expectations, staff should maintain high personal standards in terms of attendance and punctuality.

Sickness Absence:

All staff are expected to follow the organisation's absence reporting procedure when they are absent from work. This procedure includes notification as early as possible on the first day of absence, keeping the the appropriate line manager informed where absence continues, providing cover work as

appropriate and meeting requirements for the provision of medical certificates.

Prompt submission of reports and other written documentation:

Staff are expected to provide regular reports and planning documentation. Coordinators / line managers will advise appropriate timescales for submission: staff should adhere to these.

Sensitive Information and Confidentiality:

It is expected that staff will use sensitive information properly and have due respect for confidentiality.

Staff should ensure that they:

- know what information is to be treated as confidential (coordinators can clarify this);
- know who is entitled to have access to what information (again coordinators can clarify);
- are responsible and professional in using and allowing access to personal information on students, parents, staff, trustees and any other 'involved persons';
- use personal information in line with the principles of the Data Protection Acts (described within the organisation's data protection policy).

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations, May 2018). Red Balloon of the Air will provide clear advice to staff about their responsibilities under this legislation.

Staff may have access to confidential information about students and their families. This must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and deemed to be in the best interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a student or her/his family for their own advantage (or for that of others including partners,

friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

If a child, or their parent / carer, makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff must follow safeguarding procedures. The adult should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent, but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively and in line with Red Balloon of the Air policy.

Use of School Resources (including access to the internet)

Staff are expected to take care of all centre resources and to ensure that students do the same. Red Balloon of the Air communications systems and equipment, including electronic mail and Internet systems, along with their associated hardware and software, are intended for official and authorised purposes. Coordinators may authorise personal use provided that such use:

- does not interfere with the performance of professional duties;
- is of reasonable duration and frequency;
- does not overburden the system or create any additional expense to the organisation.

Managers should consider carefully discretionary use for any other purpose.

Staff are expected to conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the internet, and to respect the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and prerogatives of others. Internet users are prohibited from transmitting or downloading material that is obscene, pornographic, threatening, racially or sexually harassing, or in any way contravenes equal

opportunities legislation.

No sites known to contain offensive or potentially 'radicalising' material may be visited through Red Balloon of the Air hardware.

General standards of behaviour:

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in disqualification from childcare, prohibition from teaching by the NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership), a bar from engaging in regulated activity, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

Issues arising through curriculum delivery:

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Staff must ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the designated safeguarding lead. Staff should always discuss any 'areas of concern' openly with colleagues to minimise the likelihood of practice that may be damaging for students.

Care should be taken to comply with requirements for the promotion of

fundamental British values. Staff should also comply at all times with the policy for sex and relationships education (SRE). Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from the National Curriculum for science.

Social Contact Outside the Workplace:

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of students, independent of any professional relationship. Staff should, however, be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with students or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children (eg attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a student or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise their professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role, this should be discussed with senior management and, where necessary, referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Communication with students:

Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, emails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other handheld devices (given the ever changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not

exhaustive).

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children other than that which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

This means that staff should:

- not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with students outside of the purposes of their work;
- not give out their personal details;
- use only equipment and Internet services provided by the organisation;
- follow the RBAir agreement re 'safe use of technology';
- ensure that their use of technologies could not bring Red Balloon of the Air into disrepute.

Staff should not give their personal contact details to children eg email address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, s/he should not respond and must report the matter to their manager.

Staff must exercise proper professional judgement regarding any contact with 'ex' students. Once those students reach adulthood, then there can be no restriction other than would apply to any contact made either 'directly' or on social media.

NB There may be occasions when activities take place outside 'normal' RBAir working locations and, through appropriate risk assessment, it is considered necessary for more mobile phones to be available than are possessed by RBAir; hence a judgement may be made that personal staff phones will be available for emergency use.

Through general conversation or more formal conversation eg 'circle time' or 'wellbeing' session...

Staff can make individual decisions as to how much of their 'own 'life' they

wish to share with students, but must be aware that all subject matter should be appropriate to the age of the student and always fall within professional boundaries. During such conversations staff must not:

- be negatively critical of other students (behaviour may be challenged, but criticism of the student him/herself is not acceptable);
- be negatively critical of other staff;
- describe any dissatisfaction with their 'working experience' at Red Balloon of the Air (any such concerns must be appropriately raised with pertinent managers).

Personal use of social media / networking sites:

Staff should not post photos of staff or school events on any social media site without eliciting consent from those featured in pictures.

In cases wherein staff use social media / networking sites, they should remember that students may have access to those sites, thus it is their responsibility to ensure that any information posted there is either saved in a manner that makes it inaccessible to students or is of a nature that is appropriate to be viewed by them.

Use of camera phones:

Staff must ensure that they do not take photographs of students on personal equipment.

Physical contact:

By definition staff working within RBAir will make minimal 'actual' contact with students, but they need to remain aware of the following guidance:

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the student's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the

student's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that the student may be uncomfortable *or* embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some pupils are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the young person.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one student, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Any physical contact should be in response to the student's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults must, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or, if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the coordinator and recorded. Where appropriate, the coordinator should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the child may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should recognise that students who have undergone such experiences may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Where some contact is necessary within the curriculum (eg within drama or PE), it should take place in a safe and open environment (ie one easily observed by others) and last for the minimum time necessary. The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the student. Contact should be relevant to the student's age and understanding

and staff must remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

Smoking / vaping:

Staff must never smoke or vape whilst on Red Balloon of the Air premises or in the company of students.

Trips (day and residential):

Staff are expected to adopt the highest standards of behaviour when 'out' with students. Whilst responsible for students (eg throughout a residential trip), staff must not consume alcohol or take drugs (other than those which are medically prescribed).

Sexual Conduct:

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a student is unacceptable, illegal with a student under 18 years of age, and will always be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary action.

Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions depending on their age and understanding. This includes the prohibition of sexual activity with children by adults in a position of trust.

Sexual activity involves physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, however it also includes non-contact activities, such as causing or encouraging students to engage in or watch sexual activity, or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate the relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. All staff will undertake appropriate training so they are fully aware of those behaviours that may constitute 'grooming' and of their responsibility to always report to a senior manager any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a student is being groomed.

Keeping Within the Law:

Staff are expected to operate within the law. Proven unlawful or criminal behaviour, at work, or outside work, will lead to internal disciplinary action and may result in dismissal.

Any member of staff who is charged with any criminal offence must notify their coordinator (coordinators should notify a member of 'Group') immediately. The chief executive will consider whether that charge should lead to further internal disciplinary action. If the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature, it may lead to immediate dismissal.

Policy reviewed and updated September 2019) jointly between RBAir senior staff and Bob Sproson, Director of Education - for annual review.