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| **Staff Safeguarding Code of Conduct** | H:\Merger\trafford_college_group_logo.bmp |

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| **Approved by:** | **Leadership Team** | **Approval Date:** | **September 2020** |

# (Including, Governors, Volunteers and Visitors)

1. **Introduction**

Within this Code, reference to staff includes staff, governors, volunteers and visitors. Reference to students includes young people and vulnerable adults.

This Code of Conduct has been written to assist staff in maintaining acceptable/professional conduct and relationships with students. This Code is not a legal document but is intended to provide staff with guidance on carrying out their roles and responsibilities and provide clarity on the boundaries associated with their roles and responsibilities.

The purpose of this Code is to protect both staff and students. The Code will help staff to avoid situations that might lead to allegations being made against them and will help reassure students and other parties, for example parents/carers, that a strategy exists in relation to Safeguarding. The code is based upon the DFE document ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education- statutory guidance for schools and colleges’ in which can be found useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with discussion of the issues raised.

This Code cannot provide a comprehensive checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. Rather, it highlights behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable.

There will always be occasions when staff need to make decisions or take action in the best interest of the students which could contravene the guidance within this Code, or where no guidance exists. In such circumstances staff will be expected to make professional judgements and in doing so will be seen to be acting reasonably.

Staff should also consider this guidance alongside:

* The Trafford College Group Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy (August 2020)
* The Trafford College Group Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Remote Education Guidance (September 2020)
* Department for Education: Keeping Young People Safe in Education (Part 1: September 2020)

Copies of these documents, alongside this Code of Conduct, can be obtained via the Safeguarding Hub on My Day.

This Code of Conduct also provides additional information regarding delivering education on-line which is complimentary to The Trafford College Group Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Remote Education Guidance (September 2020), reflecting the changed delivery and business model in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Basic Principles

* The welfare of students and staff is paramount.
* All students should be treated with respect and dignity.
* Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students.
* Staff should actively ensure that they complete and remain up to date with all mandatory safeguarding training.
* Staff should be familiar with the Group’s Safeguarding Procedure.
* Staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour and be open and transparent when working with students in order to protect students from abuse and to protect themselves from false allegations.
* Any incidents or behaviour which give rise to concern should be discussed immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
* Any allegations or suspicions that a student is being abused should be reported immediately to the DSO.
* Any allegations or concerns regarding another member of staff must be reported immediately to the Principal unless the Principal is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the senior staff member with Lead Responsibility or the Designated Governor.
* Any breaches of the law or professional guidelines could result in disciplinary and/or criminal action being taken against the individual.

# Confidentiality

Staff often have access to confidential information of a highly sensitive nature about students and /or their families. Such confidential information should only be discussed or shared on a need to know basis and where the student’s identity does not need to be disclosed such information should be used anonymously.

Where a member of staff suspects that a student is being abused they have a duty to pass such information on to the designated safeguarding officer without delay. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

# Dress and Appearance

The Group recognises that a person’s dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression, however it is important for staff to ensure that their appearance and/or dress does not leave them vulnerable to criticism/allegations. Staff should wear clothing which:

* Promotes a positive and professional image.
* Is appropriate to their role.
* Is not likely to be viewed as offensive revealing or sexually provocative.
* Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding.
* Is absent of any political or otherwise contents or slogans which may cause offence.
* Is not considered discriminatory.

# Social Contact

Social contact with students, other than that which has been organised by the Group, should be positively avoided. It is recognised that there may be occasions when social contact may be unavoidable and in such circumstances staff should, at all times, be mindful that their relationship with the student is appropriate and professional.

Staff must not give their personal details to students e.g. home/mobile numbers, home email addresses or personal social media accounts.

The Group encourages the positive use of social media as part of the educational process. Social media is used by many people, particularly students to communicate with their peers and the public. Students may wish to form personal relationships with employees, however to ensure professional boundaries are maintained; employees must not accept and/or invite the following individuals to be “friends” on personal social media accounts or other online services:

* Students, including vulnerable students who are adults or children.
* Ex-students under the age of 18, and
* Parents.

# Contact with Students through Remote Learning

The Group will apply the following principles to support on-line safety:

* + Ensuring that staff only use appropriate and Group sanctioned e-learning platforms to provide remote education, including adequate privacy settings
  + Ensuring staff do not use personal accounts on e-learning platforms, personal email addresses, or personal social media accounts
  + Ensuring that as far as possible, staff do not use personal phone numbers to contact students, and if required to do so then ensure use of blocking numbers (141)
  + Ensuring that staff only contact students in normal college working hours
  + Ensuring that if staff provide recorded or live-streaming lessons, they are filmed in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be visible
  + Ensuring staff use teaching and learning opportunities to provide students with clear advice and guidance about how to stay safe on-line, including discussion of the benefits and risks of the on-line world
  + Ensuring that staff are able to refer students to appropriate support if they have a concern or worry, including where necessary engaging the Pastoral Support Mentors (PSMs)
  + Ensuring that staff report any safeguarding concern or bullying instances through the reporting mechanisms outlined above in this guidance document
  + Ensuring that staff encourage students to take regular breaks from on-line activity to support mental health and wellbeing

Further guidance can be found in the document *Teaching and Learning Effectively Online* by Agile CLS, which the Group recommends as a good practice guide for on- line education safety. A copy of this document will also be available on the Safeguarding Hub on My Day.

# General Relationships with Students

Staff should ensure that their relationship with students is appropriate to the learner group. Care must be taken to ensure that attitudes, demeanour, language or conduct could not be construed as inappropriate.

Although is it recognised that some students will need more help/support it is important that staff do not favour any particular student, as favouritism might be construed as being part of a ‘grooming process’ which is an offence.

Staff must not give gifts/rewards to students unless the gift/reward is part of an open competition where all learners have been involved and have been made aware of the arrangements.

Any member of staff who feels that their relationship with a particular student is developing into one that would be deemed inappropriate the member of staff should discuss the matter with their line manager immediately.

# Sexual Contact

Staff should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from students. Any sexual contact initiated by a person of trust towards a learner is both inappropriate and illegal, even where the learner is over 18. Any behaviour that has either explicit sexual connotations or innuendo is unacceptable and will be treated by the Group as extremely serious.

# Physical Contact / Intervention

As a general principle, staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with students. There may be rare occasions when a learner needs comfort or reassurance which may include physical comforting.

In such circumstances it is necessary for staff to make sure that any comforting gestures are deemed as acceptable to the student. Staff need to be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student.

Physical intervention can be defined as “the reasonable application of the minimum necessary force to overpower a student with the intention of preventing them from harming themselves or others, or from causing serious damage to property.”

Staff should only use physical intervention where absolutely necessary. It should be used primarily for the benefit of the person/s and, though immediate, should be a considered response. In such circumstance staff should use the minimum force necessary. Where staff have been involved in incidents of physical intervention a written record of the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

Some staff, for example, those who teach on Sports Studies courses, will on occasion have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support the student in safely completing a task or to demonstrate the use of equipment. This should be done for the minimum amount of time required and with the student’s agreement.

# One to One Situations

It is recognised that there will be occasions when staff are required to work in one to one situations with students. In such circumstances staff may be more vulnerable to allegations. To safeguard against any allegations staff should:

* Consider the needs and circumstances of the student involved.
* Avoid meeting students in remote/secluded areas of the College.
* Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.
* Ahead of the meeting taking place inform colleagues and assess whether it is appropriate to have a colleague either present or close by.
* If a student becomes distressed or angry, report it to a senior colleague.

Staff are not permitted to meet with students away from the College site unless prior approval has been obtained from the learner’s parent/carer and the Principal, or other senior post holder.

# Transporting Students

Staff should not normally transport students in their own private vehicles and other transport should be arranged e.g. college minibus or taxi. In the exceptional circumstance where staff are required to transport students they must consult their head of section (e.g. Head of Studies, Programme Leader) and ensure they have adequate personal car insurance, business insurance is not necessarily adequate. In addition, they must also follow the guidance as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy Procedure for the use on personal vehicles on College Business which explains how any risks should be mitigated.

# All staff should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officers at the College and should be familiar with and follow the College’s Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

A list of all DSOs, including contact details, is available on the Safeguarding Hub on My Day.