

Code of Professional Conduct		
Lead: Director of People Services		Status: Approved
Version: 2		Date of Version: September 2024
Approving Body: Executive Team		Supersedes:
Approved on: July 2017		Next Review date: September 2029
Equality analysis tool ¹		
1.	Is the policy relevant to the public sector equality duty?	Yes
2.	Have any concerns previously been raised about this policy or practice?	No
3.	Is likely to result in discrimination against a protected group?	No
4.	Does this policy positively contribute to the participation of under-represented groups in the College's activities?	No
Version Control		
Version	Date	Change(s)
2	September 2024	Terminology and definition update in line with Group changes.
Access		
Location	Address/Link	
Sharepoint		
Service Centre		
Document Centre		
Communication		
Medium	Audience	
e.g. Team Briefing, Managers' Briefing, All-site Staff Meetings	Direct email to all staff. Communications channels discussed with TU's.	

¹ The Screening Template relating to the Code of Professional Conduct can be found on page 9 of this document.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR STAFF

Review Cycle: **Every Five Years**

Next Review Date: **September 2029**

Person Responsible: **Director of People Services**

Approving Body: **Executive Team**

1. Introduction

The Code of Professional Conduct provides clarity and consistency in relation to the reasonable expectations of all colleagues. It has a preventative role and requires us to challenge unprofessional conduct by questioning behaviour that falls below expected standards, reporting and/or to take appropriate action against such behaviour.

This Code sets out, in very broad terms, the principles and expected behaviour that will promote, reinforce and support the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group values and expected standards. This includes:

- The Group expectations in relation to standards of conduct and professionalism,
- Ensuring that the student learning experience is at the heart of everything we do,
- Protecting us from accusations of improper conduct when the principles have been followed.

The areas identified are by no means exhaustive and we are all required to work to the spirit of the code as well as to the letter.

If you are in any doubt about the content and the application of the Code of Professional Conduct, please discuss this with your line manager.

2. Scope

The Code applies to all employees, Governors, apprentices, interns, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and any one individual working for, or on behalf of, the Group in their professional and work-related activities. It takes into account the principles laid down by the Nolan Committee for those holding public office i.e., selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

The Group respects the right of staff to a personal life outside of work. All staff should be clear of their contractual obligations and should not take employment or engage in activities

outside of the Group that conflict with the Group interests or could be perceived to be detrimental to the Group reputation.

It is important that we also familiarise ourselves with Group Policy and Procedures, ensuring our actions are in accordance with them at all times.

3. Professional Conduct

It is important that we are all aware of our professional conduct. We must understand our responsibilities, role and position and recognise our own accountability for the way we present our actions and ourselves. This includes:

- 3.1 Adopting high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of our peers, students and the public in general.
- 3.2 Applying our skill and judgement, legally and with honesty, diligence and integrity.
- 3.3 Maintaining a high level of personal performance at all times and seeking to continually improve our performance and update and refresh our skills and knowledge.
- 3.4 Recognising our obligations to all those with whom the Group has dealings: learners, employees, employers, suppliers, other educational institutions, the wider community, the public generally, and the taxpayer including efficient use of resources.
- 3.5 Maintaining fair and reasonable standards in the treatment of people who are operating within the scope of our influence and treat everyone we come into contact with during the course of our duties with courtesy and respect.
- 3.6 Taking responsibility for our own behaviour and be mindful of its impact on others.
- 3.7 Take personal responsibility to uphold our values and reputation inside and outside of normal working hours.
- 3.8 Compliance with all lawful and reasonable instructions from managers.
- 3.9 Challenging or raising concerns relating to bad practice or improper conduct using appropriate channels.
- 3.10 Not become involved in any activity which brings the Group into disrepute as a result of our knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in our role or position.

4. Safeguarding

By working in an educational setting, we hold positions of trust and have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in our ability to perform our duties and to safeguard the welfare and best interests of all students at all times.

Any person working with students in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care. We must always act, and be seen to act, in the students' best interests.

We must therefore:

- 4.1 Ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a young person involved in any activity or interaction for which we or the Group are responsible.
- 4.2 Immediately report any safeguarding concerns, including those which relate to the conduct of colleagues.
- 4.3 Be aware of the principles of Prevent, our duty to be aware of risks of extremism and to ensure concerns are reported promptly.
- 4.4 Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question our motivation, intentions or suitability to work with students.
- 4.5 Be aware of and deal with any situations of infatuation from learners sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned by reporting any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggests a young learner may be infatuated to our manager.
- 4.6 Establish professional relationships with all students and know what boundaries to set.
- 4.7 Ensure that our behaviour remains professional at all times.

It is essential that the above guidance is read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Safe Working Practice guidance, and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

5. Professional Working Relationships

We must maintain professional working relationships at all times. Where a close personal relationship exists within the workplace, for example, with another employee, Governor, student or contractor or potential contractor, we must:

- 5.1 Ensure that consideration is given to whether the relationship could cause, or perceive to cause, a conflict of interest.
- 5.2 Ensure that the relationship cannot open claims of favouritism.
- 5.3 Formally note any conflict of personal interest arising from a line management situation and withdraw from any situation which may involve, amongst others, conducting appraisals, writing references, formally interviewing, approving training for the other.
- 5.4 Declare any conflicts of personal interest in relation to examination and assessment boards.
- 5.5 Notify the Group where authorities under Group Financial Regulations will benefit the other, e.g. the authorising of expense claims.

In all cases any potential conflict must be reported to our line managers immediately to ensure appropriate steps are carried out to alleviate any associated risk.

6. Equality and Diversity

We must show respect and act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 at all times. In particular, we must:

- 6.1 Take personal responsibility to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded throughout the Group.
- 6.2 Develop our own understanding of the issues affecting underrepresented groups.
- 6.3 Seek and challenge unconscious and unintentional personal discriminatory beliefs
- 6.4 Challenge any discriminatory practice.

7. Health & Safety

The Group has a duty to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment and to protect our health and safety.

As individuals, we must:

- 7.1 Take reasonable care of our own health and safety and not act wilfully or unintentionally in a way that could put themselves, colleagues, students or visitors to the Group at risk by our acts or omissions.
- 7.2 Adhere to the guidelines and regulations as described within the Group Health and Safety policies and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

We are required to act in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 at all times.

In particular we must:

- 8.1 Treat information we receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner; however, any information relating to a safeguarding issue or concern must be managed in accordance with the Group Safeguarding Policy.
- 8.2 Not disclose any information about employees, applicants, students or potential students without the explicit consent of the individual.
- 8.3 Not disclose to a third party any financial information, marketing strategies and business plans relating to the Group.
- 8.4 Not make formal statements to the press, or any other organisation, about or on behalf of the Group and or learners without prior authorisation from the Principal/CEO.

The Group recognises individual liberty and the freedom of speech to question, and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas or controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing our employment or position in jeopardy. We understand that we are able

speak freely and without being subject to disciplinary sanctions or victimisation provided that we do so lawfully, respectfully, without malice and in the public interest.

Please refer to Group Data Protection Policy and the Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy.

9. Appearance and Manner

We represent the Group's standards and professional status and must present a professional image at all times.

The Group recognises diversity of cultures and religious beliefs and will ensure that we are free to observe them providing communication is not impeded and health and safety and security rules are not breached.

We must:

- 9.1 Maintain a professional appearance at all times and ensure we are dressed formally and/or appropriately, for the work we are undertaking.
- 9.2 Ensure our appearance supports the principle of work readiness and clearly differentiates us from learners.
- 9.3 Ensure that language is professional and not use language that may be deemed abusive, offensive, or discriminative, whether verbal or written.
- 9.4 Wear our ID badge at all times whilst working and challenge others where ID is not visible.
- 9.5 Wear supplied uniform and conform to clothing requirements supplied for health and safety reasons.

10. Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

The Group is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all and operates specific rules in relation to the use of alcohol, drugs and smoking.

We must:

- 10.1 Ensure that we are aware of and act in accordance with the Group Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking policy at all times.
- 10.2 Use appropriate channels to raise any legitimate concerns relating to the actions of others.

11. Mobile Phones, Social Media/Networking and Internet Usage

The Group provides internet and e-mail facilities for business and educational purposes in the interest of the Group, its clients and customers for use in the course of our normal duties.

We must:

- 11.1 Ensure all our communications through Group systems are courteous and professional.
- 11.2 Ensure our use of Group communication systems is appropriate and in accordance with our role and responsibilities.
- 11.3 Ensure communication on corporate and personal social media websites cannot be deemed as inappropriate or defamatory against the Group, its staff, students or associated third party.

Please refer to the Group IT Policy and Social Media Policy for further guidance.

12. Criminal / Professional Background

We must:

- 12.1 Notify the Group of any cautions/convictions or reprimands that occur during the course of the employment relationship.
- 12.2 Declare any changes to our membership of professional bodies and the reason for the changes.

13. Conflicts of interest

We must:

- 13.1 Declare, either verbally or in writing (to the agency contact if appropriate), any matters in which we may have or be seen to have personal interest, either direct or indirect, in contracts, in staff appointments or in the selection of learners.
- 13.2 Notify, and obtain written consent, to undertake secondary employment or engagement whilst employed by the Group.
- 13.3 Not solicit or accept inducements in respect of any matter connected with the operation of the Group.
- 13.4 Not misuse our official position or any information acquired in our official duties to further our private interests or those of others.

14. Procurement Ethics

We are required to adhere to standards of conduct as detailed in the Group Financial Regulations and Group Expenses and Benefits Procedures at all times.

15. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any breach of this Code will be handled in accordance with Group Disciplinary Procedures or referred to and dealt with by the appropriate agency as necessary.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Director of People Services is responsible for monitoring the application of the Code of Professional Conduct which will be reviewed every five years, or sooner as required.

Appendix One: Screening Tool

Public sector equality duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires College to have **due regard** for the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; this involves considering the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics;
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in activities where their participation is low; and to
- foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Consequently, we need to assure ourselves that our policies will not have an adverse differential impact on any particular group. This pre-screening section will enable you to identify whether your policy is likely to have an adverse differential impact.

Please use the following template to help determine whether an equality analysis is required

Name of the policy
Author(s): Kathy Fisher

Author(s) of Equality Analysis:
Name: Kathy Fisher
Job title: Director of People Services
Date: 21 Nov 2017
Signature: K Fisher

In order to decide whether the policy requires further action, please complete the following questions:

1. What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the policy?

The aim of the Code of Professional Conduct is to outline the principles and expected behaviour that will promote, reinforce and support College values and expected standards.

2. Will these aims affect our duty to:

	Yes / No	How?
advance equality of opportunity?	No	
eliminate discrimination?	Yes	By ensuring that all employees act and are aware of the required standards of professionalism.
eliminate harassment?	Yes	Through a direct link to disciplinary policy. Ensuring that acts are dealt with in a way which
foster good relations between people from different groups ?	Yes	By encouraging and explaining the required standards of professionalism in personal conduct.
tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people from different groups?	Yes	By encouraging and explaining the required standards of professionalism in personal conduct.

3. What aspects of the policy, including how it is delivered, or accessed, could contribute to inequality?

The CoPC will primarily be accessed electronically through the staff intranet. Employee readership will be confirmed through Virtual College. Other versions of the document will be available upon request.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the experience of people, including those who share a protected characteristic?

Please complete the following table:

Protected characteristic	Meet needs of people with this characteristic	Encourage participation (if under-represented)	Remove or minimise disadvantages	Possible negative impact
Race	Yes			
Gender	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Religion / belief	Yes			
Sexual orientation	Yes			
Gender reassignment	Yes			
Pregnancy /maternity	Yes			
Age	Yes			
Marriage / civil partnership*	Yes			

Evidence:

The Code of Professional Conduct supports positive behaviour across all parts of College. It supports professionalism in the workplace. Actions which go against the required standards of professionalism will be appropriately managed.

The College will tackle all acts which contravene the required professionalism to ensure that no individual, regardless of characteristic, is treated less favourably.

6. What different needs, experiences or attitudes are particular communities or groups likely to have in relation to this policy?

Not aware of any.

Next steps

If your answers to these questions have identified potential negative impacts, then you should consider further consultation or action to minimise the differential impact. Please contact the Executive Director Curriculum & Quality for support.

If no further action is required, please sign the declaration below and include with all published copies of the policy.

Declaration

The policy does not have a significant impact upon equality issues and therefore does not require any further action.

Author(s) of EA.
Name: Kathy Fisher
Job title: Director of People Services
Date: 29 November 2017
Signature: K L Fisher