

## 1. Purpose

All staff at Walsall College have a legal and moral duty to keep students safe at all times and protect them from physical and emotional harm, including the risk of grooming for sexual exploitation or radicalisation. So, it is vital that our behaviour and approaches are exemplary. This Code of Conduct clearly sets out the behaviours we expect that will ensure the wellbeing of students and staff and minimises the potential for any allegations, which may be made against us as staff. This duty of care also applies to Apprentices and Assessors who visit/work in the workplace and to volunteers and governors.

Conduct outside of work also has a bearing on our work in College because of the close working relationship we have with children and adults at risk of harm. If a staff/volunteer/governor is arrested/cautioned/bailed by the Police for a sexual offence who is seen to hold a Position of Trust (POT) the College will be notified and will have to take suitable safeguarding action. There is also a requirement on individuals to declare any criminal convictions or charges pending, new or spent or allegations of impropriety or misconduct staff' conduct outside of work when it involves any situation that could bring the College into disrepute, affect relationships with students, or cause harm to the reputation of the College.

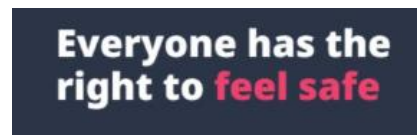
This Code of Conduct reflects the College's commitment to safeguarding, professionalism and our ICARE values – Inclusive, Collaborative, Accountable, Resilient and Enterprising – which guide how we work with students, colleagues and the wider community.

## 2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff of Walsall College and anyone working within it on a voluntary, temporary, contractor or placement basis. It is the responsibility of all to familiarise themselves with it. All individuals are expected to familiarise themselves with this Code and adhere to the standards outlined. Failure to do so may result in appropriate action being taken, including disciplinary action under the College's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (where applicable). Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, staff will use their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the college and its students.

## 3. Safeguarding and Welfare

All staff, volunteers, and governors must actively promote student safety and welfare, including identifying and reporting any student safeguarding concerns, such as signs of abuse, neglect, grooming, radicalisation via **MyConcern** or serious and low-level concerns about staff conduct or behaviour, in line with the College's safeguarding procedures. Any staff concerns must be reported confidentially via **MyConfide-Staff Safeguarding**, the College's designated safeguarding and wellbeing platform. Everyone is responsible for following the Prevent Duty to protect students from exposure to extremist views or harmful activities. Mandatory safeguarding and PREVENT training are essential to ensure all staff understand and uphold these responsibilities. Failure to adhere to safeguarding protocols will be regarded as a serious breach of conduct.



## Communication

- Communicate respectfully and professionally with students, colleagues, and parents, including via email, phone, or other College-approved channels.
- Report any abusive, inappropriate, or concerning messages immediately to your line manager or HR.
- Ensure any digital images of students are only taken or shared with appropriate consent, following the College's E-Communication Policy.
- Maintain professional boundaries in all communications; be mindful of tone, clarity, and appropriateness
- Never accept or invite students as contacts or "friends" on social networking sites.
- Never take, use, or share images of students for personal purposes, online or offline
- Never engage in sarcasm, innuendo, or language that could be misinterpreted or considered inflammatory.

## Confidentiality

- Never promise confidentiality to students or staff.
- Do not share confidential information about students or staff with anyone, other than on a professional need to know basis.
- Do not forward internal emails or information that contain sensitive, confidential or inappropriate content to external parties including parents.
- Never pass on confidential information relating to the College and/or its internal/ external clients without first seeking guidance.
- Confidential data and information relating to students or staff must be stored securely and should be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.
- Any confidential information taken off-site must be stored securely and must only be accessible to you.

## Transporting Students

- You may only transport students with consent from a member of SMT and/or Duty Manager & with adequate insurance
- Never transport a student to hospital in your own vehicle following an accident. Call an ambulance.
- Where it is deemed acceptable by the College & approved for students to be given lifts by staff, the appropriate car insurance must be obtained; otherwise, the staff may be liable for damages.
- Transport arrangements for trips should be Risk Assessed in line with the Out of College Activity Policy.

## Wellbeing & Professional Conduct

- At Walsall College wellbeing is embedded in how we work together and uphold our responsibilities.
- Staff are acting in a position of trust and must act as a role model by consistently demonstrating high standards of behaviour acting appropriately and professionally.
- All staff are expected to contribute to a culture of wellbeing through conduct that reflects our ICARE values.

This includes:

- Acting with personal and professional integrity respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.
- Using established channels such **My Concern** for students or **MyConfide - Staff Safeguarding** to raise staff wellbeing, safeguarding or low-level concerns in line with safeguarding and duty of care principles.
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination or any behaviour that undermines the dignity of others is unacceptable and will be treated as a serious breach of conduct
- Any incidents of harassment or inappropriate behaviours should be reported to a line manager, HR or via **MyConfide - Staff safeguarding**.

## Prevent

- The College has a legal duty to have due regard to the *Prevent* agenda/strategy – to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Staff should not engage in any activities linked to terrorism or violent extremism.
- If you suspect that a student or staff member is at risk of radicalisation it is your duty to report it to a Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Staff must undertake *Prevent* awareness training to help prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

## Finance

- Staff should not enter into any personal financial transactions with students.
- Staff must not accept gifts from students, excluding token gifts. If of a greater value than a token gift (over £25), staff should declare it to the Head of Finance.
- Staff should not handle finances for students, unless pertinent to your role.
- Staff should not lend money to students or borrow money from students. In situations of extreme hardship students should be referred to the Safeguarding team or Bursary team based on the CASC desk.(See Financial Regulations).
- Staff who utilise College facilities or benefits, such as the Nursery must ensure that fees are paid in a timely manner.

## Whistleblowing

- If you feel anyone is behaving inappropriately towards students, or you suspect grooming (for sexual abuse or radicalisation) might be taking place, you have a duty to report it to the Head of HR or the Head of Student Wellbeing, Inclusion & Safeguarding (see Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and Whistleblowing Policy).
- This also includes understanding your duty to act upon and report low level concerns with respect to staff conduct or behaviour.
- If you do not feel able to escalate child protection concerns internally you can contact The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line confidentially on 0800 028 0285.

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

- Walsall College is passionate about inclusion, respect and diversity, enabling all students and staff to reach their full potential.
- All staff must contribute to a respectful, inclusive and professional working environment.
- Staff should not act in a way which is discriminatory towards individuals or groups for reasons of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (see EDIB policy and Procedure).
- The College has a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of harassment, including sexual, racial harassment, and bullying.
- Staff must respect the dignity of all individuals. All incidents of harassment should be reported immediately and will be taken seriously with appropriate action taken.

## Relationships

- All staff have a duty of care to keep students safe and are accountable for how they use their authority and position of trust. This duty must be exercised through the development of caring but professional relationships.
- You must not form a close personal relationship with a student. This includes former students where a professional connection, influence, or power imbalance exists that could create a conflict of interest or compromise professional integrity.
- It is a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with anyone under 18.
- Staff must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee, a student, client, customer or former student of the College.
- Staff should not offer private tutoring to students.
- The College does not condone any sexual relationships between students and staff, regardless of age.

## Physical Contact

- All staff have a responsibility and role in the setting of a climate of positive behaviour.
- Staff working with students should use strategies that promote positive relationships, build self-esteem, provide clear expectations, and help prevent or de-escalate challenging behaviour.
- Physical contact with students should be avoided unless staff have received relevant training,
- Staff may only intervene through physical contact if there is reasonable belief that a student might injure themselves or others.
- Do not use physical intimidation and respect a student's personal space.
- Never try to bar a student's way or physically prevent them leaving a room unless it is done clearly for their safety or the safety of others.
- Always try to diffuse situations without physical intervention.
- Staff who are required to administer personal care should adhere to the personal care section of the SEND policy.

## Propriety

- Staff should treat all students and colleagues fairly and equally.
- Be aware of how your actions may be viewed by others.
- Do not make remarks to a student or a colleague or behave in a way, which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or discriminatory.
- Do not discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students.
- Do not bring any dangerous items into work.
- Sexual harassment – including unwanted comments, gestures, physical contact will not be tolerated under any circumstances
- Academic staff and Academic related staff have the right to academic freedom in teaching, research, discussion and union activity within the boundaries of respectful and lawful conduct.

## One to One Situations

- Avoid putting yourself or students at risk by meeting with an individual student in an area where you are not visible to others
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door. Be wary of using 'do not disturb' or equivalent signs.
- Try to ensure other staff are around or at least aware that a 1:1 meeting is taking place with a student, where possible.
- If you have reason to be concerned prior to a meeting, arrange for a colleague to be present.
- If anything happens which you feel uncomfortable about, speak to your line manager/senior manager or a Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, if appropriate, as soon as possible.

## Behaviour Expectations

### Upholding Professionalism and Respect

- Use language and behaviour that reflects respect, inclusion and professionalism. Do not use language or behaviour, which may be interpreted as threatening, discriminatory, bullying or sexualised.
- Avoid over-familiarity and banter with students – both may be misinterpreted and may breach professional boundaries
- Maintain clear professional boundaries with students; avoid inappropriate personal relationships or communication.
- Staff must not attend work or carry out duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances or consume non prescribed drugs or drink alcohol whilst at work. Staff can drink alcohol in moderation during social events arranged by the College but should always remain fit for work. (See Alcohol and Drugs Policy).
- Staff are expected to dress appropriately for their role and maintain a professional image, including wearing their college ID badge and lanyard at all times while on site or representing the college.
- Your ID badge must not be shared with anyone else under any circumstances.
- With express consent, an employee may be subject to a search if there is a reasonable belief that the employee is in the possession of illegal drugs or dangerous weapons (with the exception of Sacred Kirpan). The search must be carried out by an authorised and trained individual in line with the Search Policy. If an employee refuses to be searched in these circumstances or where there is evidence of prohibited items, the College reserves the right to contact the Police.
- Staff must also be mindful of how their conduct on social media may reflect upon the College and its values, especially regarding issues of discrimination, harassment, and safeguarding concerns. All staff should ensure it reflects the values of Walsall College and does not bring the College into disrepute or breach safeguarding or conduct expectations.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries when using group messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, informal group chats). These platforms must not be used to discuss sensitive matters, exclude colleagues or blur personal & professional lines. They must not be used to communicate with students unless using an approved college system and only in line with college policy. Staff should be mindful of tone, inclusivity, and out of hours messaging. College systems must be used for college business including formal communication, reporting and collaboration.
- Staff must exercise caution when using emerging technologies including AI tools to ensure student safety and protect personal and sensitive data.
- Any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest or breach of professional boundaries should be disclosed promptly to a relevant manager or HR to ensure it is managed appropriately.

### Conduct Outside of Work

- This code also extends to staff conduct outside of work when it involves any situation that could bring the College into disrepute, affect relationships with students, or cause harm to the reputation of the College. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Criminal Charges or Convictions: It is a requirement to declare any criminal convictions, cautions, or other relevant information. This applies to all staff, including any relevant pending, new, or spent convictions that may arise during your time with us. If there are any changes to your circumstances, it is your responsibility to inform the College immediately.
  - Allegations of Impropriety or Misconduct: If any allegations are made against you concerning your conduct outside the workplace, whether in your personal life, secondary employment, volunteering, or holding a public appointment, you are required to inform the College immediately.

## Managing Allegations & Low-Level Concerns

- Walsall College is committed to maintaining a culture of openness, trust and transparency. Staff must report any concern that a colleague may pose a risk to children including meeting the threshold for serious harm such as harmful behaviours, criminal conduct or unsuitability to work with children in line with the College's Safeguarding policies.
- A low-level concern is any behaviour by a staff member that may be inconsistent with the code of conduct but does not meet threshold for serious harm but could indicate a breach of professional boundaries or raise questions about staff judgement. Examples include favouritism, overfamiliarity, inappropriate jokes, personal contact with students, behaviour that may be considered inappropriate.
- Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures via **MyConfide – Staff safeguarding**. We also encourage staff to self-refer if they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it. All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way

**Key Supporting Systems and Policies** - To uphold the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct staff are expected to engage with the following systems and policies:

- [MyConcern](#) – for reporting student safeguarding concerns
- [MyConfide – Staff safeguarding](#) – for reporting staff safeguarding concerns, wellbeing, welfare and harassment issues.
- Child Protection and Adults at Risk Safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion – Belonging Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Alcohol and Drugs Policy
- E-Communication Acceptable Use Policy
- SEND policy
- Financial Regulations

**Everyone has the  
right to feel safe**

This code of conduct is in place to protect both students and staff. It reflects our shared responsibility to remain vigilant, uphold professional boundaries and take a clear stance in our daily practices. Safeguarding concerns can and do arise in every setting including ours. By following this code, we reduce the risk, respond appropriately and create a culture where safety, trust and accountability are embedded in everything we do. It is through collective commitment that we maintain a professional environment where everyone feels safe, respected and supported.

If you have any queries about the Code or its application, please speak with your **line manager**, the **HR team**, or the **Safeguarding team**.