

# Professional Standards Policy (Code of Conduct) 2023/25

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at Fix It (UK) Ltd (the Charity). The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.
- 1.2 Fix It (UK) Ltd staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for pupils/students. Therefore, staff must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all pupils/students within the Charity.
- 1.3 Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of Fix It (UK) Ltd, both inside and outside of working hours and the work setting.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in the Charity regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to 'staff' throughout the policy relate to all of the following groups:
  - All members of staff including Managers, Teaching & Support staff
  - External Support Staff (from partner organisations)
  - All Volunteers including all Trustees.
  - Casual workers
  - Temporary and supply staff, either from agencies or engaged directly
  - Student placements, apprentices and trainee teachers
- 1.5 Fix It (UK) Ltd requires that all staff read, agree and sign (see Appendix 1) to comply with this policy.
- 1.6 Breach or failure to observe this policy may result in action being taken under the formal disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, dismissal.
- 1.7 This code of conduct is not intended to be an exhaustive list of acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour. In situations where guidance does not exist in this policy staff are expected to exercise their professional judgement and act in the best interests of the pupils/students and the Charity.

## 2.0 Professional Behaviour and Conduct

- 2.1 Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. Fix It (UK) Ltd expects staff to treat each other, pupils/students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.
- 2.2 Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.
- 2.3 Staff should show fairness in their treatment of young people and avoid behaviours such as embarrassing or humiliating pupils/students, making jokes at the expense of pupils/students, discriminating against or favouring pupils/students and sarcasm.

- 2.4 Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the Charity and must not do or say anything which may bring the Charity, its Trustees, management or reputation into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside of the Charity and responsibilities within the Charity. Staff should act in accordance with the Charity's policies and procedures at all times.
- 2.5 Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, of a political, cultural, religious or otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.
- 2.6 The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political, cultural, religious or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff must take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must not enter into or encourage inappropriate discussion about sexual, political or religious activity or behaviour or, discussions which may offend or harm others. Adults should take care to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and should act in accordance with the advice given under "Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE" and accordingly must not express any prejudicial views or attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils.
- 2.7 Staff should not behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model; make or use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils; discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils; make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such. Behaving in an unsuitable way towards children may result in disciplinary action under the Charity's Disciplinary Procedure including but not limited to the ultimate sanction of dismissal.

### **3.0 Dress and Appearance**

- 3.1 Fix It (UK) Ltd recognises that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their professional role and promote a professional image.
- 3.2 Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans. Staff must ensure they are dressed in ways which are appropriate to their role and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and specifically should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding, should be religious and culturally sensitive and free of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, and not considered to be discriminatory.
- 3.3 Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.
- 3.4 Body art that is inoffensive and uncontentious is acceptable, however, offensive or contentious body art is deemed unacceptable and should be covered. Discreet piercings are acceptable but should be appropriate and safe for the individual's work setting, The Health and Safety Policy will override this policy in relation to any piercings that could increase the risk to employee safety whilst at work.

## **4.0 Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

- 4.1 Smoking (including any E-Cigarettes / Vaping Mods) is only permitted in the designated smoking area at Fix It (UK). Staff must not smoke anywhere on the premises other than the designated area.
- 4.2 Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances at any time on Charity premises, this includes excessive drinking during a period before work commencement that would unduly affect performance at work in any way.
- 4.3 Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at Charity / student events (i.e. Leaving Proms, residential visits) both within the Charity premises and outside the Charity setting.

## **5.0 Relationships with Students**

- 5.1 Staff must maintain professional boundaries with pupils/students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.
- 5.2 Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.
- 5.3 Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with pupils/students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a pupil/student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact.
- 5.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children defines sexual abuse as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- 5.5 Staff must not make sexual remarks to a pupil/student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils/students or discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.
- 5.6 Contact with pupils/students should be through Fix It (UK) Ltd's authorised mechanisms. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with pupils/students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Programme Director immediately.
- 5.7 Fix It (UK) Ltd staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any pupil/student of Fix It (UK) Ltd on any social media platform. Staff should also

refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of pupils/students or their parents. Staff must read the Charity's e-safety policy carefully and follow all advice and guidance contained within it.

## **6.0 Infatuations**

- 6.1 It is not unusual for pupils or, sometimes, their parents to develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.
- 6.2 Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards yourself or another member of staff must be reported to your line manager.

## **7.0 Gifts / Hospitality**

- 7.1 Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift/offer of hospitality that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. However, there may be occasions where pupils/students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year.
- 7.2 It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to pupils/students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If you are unsure whether to accept a gift you should consult your line manager.
- 7.3 Staff must not accept significant gifts or hospitality from pupils, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to your line manager and recorded.
- 7.4 Personal gifts must not be given by staff to pupils/students and any reward to pupils/students should be in accordance with Fix It (UK) Ltd's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

## **8.0 Physical Contact with Pupils**

- 8.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- 8.2 Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. 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 which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.
- 8.3 It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

- 8.4 Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with pupils/students.
- 8.5 Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- 8.6 Supervisory staff should demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment on another member of staff if possible. However, they may be required to initiate physical contact with pupils/students to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the student's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment.
- 8.7 Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.
- 8.8 If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to your line manager, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.
- 8.9 Staff should refer to Fix It (UK) Ltd's Physical Intervention / Positive Handling Policy

## **9.0 Child in distress**

- 9.1 There may be occasions when a pupil/student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.
- 9.2 Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with your line manager. If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance you should seek further advice from your line manager.

## **10.0 Changing**

- 10.0 Pupils/students are entitled to respect and privacy whilst they are changing before or after workshop activity. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, meet health and safety requirements and to ensure that bullying does not take place. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the pupils/students and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- 10.1 Staff should be vigilant about their own behaviour and announce their intention of entering a changing room. Staff must not change in the same place as children, in addition, staff should ensure that post 16 groups should not change with pre 16 groups.

## **11.0 One to one situations**

- 11.1 Staff working individually with pupils/students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of pupils/students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the pupil/student and to themselves.
- 11.2 Individual work with pupils should not be undertaken in isolated areas or rooms where there is no external viewing panel or CCTV in operation. Where it is necessary to close doors for reasons of confidentiality a colleague should be made aware of this and asked to remain vigilant.

## **12.0 Transporting pupils**

- 12.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport pupils/students offsite. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.
- 12.2 Staff may only transport pupils in their car as part of Fix It UK duties if they have appropriate insurance cover (Business Use) and have provided Fix It UK with evidence of this and have another adult in the car. Staff members should not transport children in their cars without parental permission.
- 12.3 No member of staff may (as part of their school duties) transport an individual child in their car without another responsible adult.
- 12.4 In an emergency when children are taken to hospital in a staff car, there will always be another member of staff present. Depending on the nature of the emergency, parental permission may not be requested before transportation.
- 12.5 Staff should ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff should ensure that the driver has the appropriate licence for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, holds a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.
- 12.6 Staff should ensure that the driver is not distracted while the vehicle is in motion for any reason other than an emergency and should also ensure all passengers are wearing correctly fastened seat belts. Staff should never transport pupils/students while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 12.7 Prior to transporting pupils off site consent must be obtained from the pupils' parent/guardian and staff should be aware that the safety and welfare of the pupils' is their responsibility until this is safely passed back to their parent or carer.

## **13.0 E-Safety & Responsible Use of Social Media**

- 13.1 Staff should follow Fix It (UK) Ltd's E-Safety policy for staff and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times and have regard for Fix It (UK) Ltd's E-Safety policy for pupils.
- 13.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Charity or the Charity community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

- 13.3 Staff should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in their use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups. Staff should exercise care when using dating websites where staff could encounter students.
- 13.4 Staff must not make contact with pupils, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow pupils/students accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with pupils/students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of Charity email accounts or telephone equipment.
- 13.5 Staff should not make contact with pupils' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow pupils' family member's accounts on any social media platform.
- 13.6 However, the Charity acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- 13.7 Mobile phones and personally-owned devices may not be used during lessons or work activity. They should be switched off (or silent) at all times. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone should be switched off at all times and may not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones. Mobile phones and personal devices are not permitted to be used in certain areas, in particular but not limited to, toilet areas and changing areas.
- 13.8 Mobile phones and personally-owned electronic devices brought into the premises are the responsibility of the device owner. Fix It (UK) Ltd accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

## **14.0 Photography, video and images of children**

- 14.1 Many Charity activities involve recording images as part of the curriculum, extra Charity activities, publicity or to celebrate an achievement. In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the image of a pupil/student is personal data. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Act for consent to be obtained from the parent/guardian of a pupil/student for any images made. It is also important to take into account the wishes of the pupil/student, remembering that some pupils/students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed.
- 14.2 Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/guardian. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.
- 14.3 Photographs/stills or video footage of pupils/students should only be taken using Charity equipment for purposes authorised by the Charity and should be stored securely and only on Charity equipment.
- 14.4 Staff should ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership Team is aware of the proposed use of photographic/video equipment and that this is recorded in lesson

plans. All photographs/stills and video footage should be available for scrutiny and staff should be able to justify all images/video footage made.

- 14.5 Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of pupils/students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken. Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable pupils/students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that pupils/students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

## 15.0 Music within Learning Environments

- 15.1 Background music is used extensively throughout society, particularly in marketing, sports psychology and medicine. It is used to reduce stress, create an illusion, manipulate perception, alter people's emotional state, and to enhance well-being.
- 15.2 There are two reasons teaching professionals might experiment with background music in learning environments. .
- To improve behaviour and overall workshop ambience
  - To improve the quality and/or quantity of work
- 15.3 Appropriately chosen music can improve classroom behaviour and atmosphere, which in turn improves learning outcomes. As a general rule though, the more complex the learning task, the more distracting background music becomes. Studies show that the vast majority of students respond positively to having background music in a learning environment. Any music that may include offensive language, promote gang culture, be religiously extremist or of a prejudiced nature toward the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act should not be played under any circumstances.
- 15.4 There are some fundamental principles that apply when selecting background music for general learning environments.
- Do not let the students select the music. This is not about entertainment, but about establishing an environment to improve the stimulation of learning.
  - The ambient volume must be low. The physiological and psychological effects of music listening occur whether or not people are deliberately attentive to it. Volume preference is highly individualistic, but people are less tolerant of loud music rather than soft music. The louder the music, the more distracting it becomes.
  - Volume level must be consistent.

## 16.0 Confidentiality

- 16.1 Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils/students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student on a need to know basis.

- 16.2 Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil/student or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil/student.
- 16.3 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil/student is bullied by another pupil/student, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Charity procedure. It must not be discussed outside the Charity, including with the pupil/student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the Charity except by a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.
- 16.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share with Fix It (UK) Ltd's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a pupil/student or that might suggest a pupil/student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with the Charity's safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the pupil/student.
- 16.5 Staff should refer to the Department of Education's document Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for further guidance on information sharing. If you are in any doubt about whether to share you should seek guidance from a member of the senior leadership team.
- 16.6 Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the senior leadership team and only approved staff and Governors should communicate to the media about the Charity.

## **17.0 Whistleblowing**

- 17.1 Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.
- 17.2 All Charity staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to Fix It (UK) Ltd's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of pupils/students may be at risk.

## **18.0 Compliance**

- 18.1 All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy. This form should be signed and dated and a copy sent to Human Resources to be placed on the member of staff's file.

**Appendix 1 to the Fix It UK Ltd Professional Standards Policy 2022/24**

**Confirmation of compliance**

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and I agree to comply with Fix It (UK) Ltd's staff Professional Standards Policy.

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_