OP11 – Code of Conduct

RISE Learning Zone.
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Reason	Amendment Details	Author	Date
1st Issue	Updated policy	Kirsty Sanders	01.09.2025

Full Policy Sign Off

Signed	
Printed	Kirsty Sander
Position	Director
Dated	01.09.2025

Introduction and Purpose

RISE Learning Zone is based on core approaches of **integrity**, **inclusion,** and **ownership** and aims to ensure that these are central to all we do.

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations and standards of conduct for all our staff. Some parts will affect certain staff more than others. It is designed to protect RISE Learning Zone staff from criticism and misunderstanding, and to ensure that we, as an organisation and as individuals, comply with the law and with best practice in our relationships with learners, families, other staff and stakeholders.

Although this Code of Conduct is written in relation to staff, the policy should also be adhered to by Volunteers and casual workers, this will be covered as part of the induction to the organisation.

This Code of Conduct also includes provisions to ensure that we abide by the Bribery Act 2010 and that employees avoid any conflict of interest in their dealings with other employees, learners, families, other staff and stakeholders, suppliers, contractors and all other stakeholders.

We have a legal responsibility to provide protection to employees under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and have a separate Whistle Blowing Procedure which is available on the extranet.

This Code of Conduct covers some of the most important issues relating to personal conduct and gives a framework of standards and behaviour, but it is not intended to be exhaustive. It must be read and complied with in conjunction with any other documents as listed below.

The Code of Conduct

Job Duties & Authority

Employees should complete their job responsibilities with integrity. They need to respect coworkers, learners, and other stakeholders in their daily activities. Managers must not abuse their authority. They must delegate duties to their team members by considering their workload

and competencies. Team members must follow team leader instructions and complete their tasks with due care and on time.

Communication

All employees must be open for communication with their colleagues, supervisors, or team members.

Language

When working with young people, it's important to maintain professional boundaries in your language and communication. This includes:

- Avoiding inappropriate language: Don't swear, use pet names, or make jokes at the expense of young people.
- Avoiding inappropriate topics: Don't talk about personal matters or sexually inappropriate topics with young people.
- Avoiding inappropriate comments: Don't make inappropriate comments about a young person's appearance.
- Avoiding sharing personal information: Don't share your personal contact details with young people, and don't share information that identifies other young people.
- Avoiding misinterpretation: Be careful that what you say can't be misconstrued and avoid innuendo.
- Avoiding sharing information with other young people: Don't talk about young people to other young people.
- Avoiding sharing information outside of work hours: If a young person contacts you outside of work hours, direct them to the right support and tell your manager.
- When setting boundaries, use clear, kind language.

Dress Code

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for the range of activities that may take place during the Rise school day. Rise encourages employees to dress comfortably in casual attire, taking into consideration appropriate footwear. Employees use their best judgement to dress with professionalism and not wear anything that would make learners or other employees uncomfortable. Please wear clothing with no profanities or distracting or revealing designs.

Lateness and absenteeism

Employees should follow the standard working hours. When an employee needs to deviate from the standard working hours, they need to agree on a work schedule with their line manager. The company expects all staff members to be punctual for meetings. They need to comply with the standard working hours when arriving at work and leaving work at the end of the day.

Protection of Rise Property

All employees should treat Rise property, whether material or intangible, with respect and care. Employees:

- Should not misuse company equipment or use it frivolously.
- Should respect all kinds of incorporeal property. This includes trademarks, copyright, and other property (information, reports etc.) Employees should use them only to complete their job duties.

Employees should protect company facilities and other material property (e.g. company cars) from damage and vandalism, whenever possible.

Equality and Diversity

- RISE Learning Zone expects that high standards of behaviour will be upheld by all staff and believes that everyone has a right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
- We seek to ensure that our work environment is supportive and one where respect is shown to all.
- All staff must comply fully with our Equality and Diversity Policy in all areas of their work and in their dealings on behalf of RISE Learning Zone.

Personal Conduct, Professional boundaries and Conflicts of Interest (any actual or potential conflicts of interest must be stated on the Declaration of Interest Form, discussed with the Management Team and sent to Management Team.)

Employees must never:

- Allow any interest or personal relationship with other staff, learners, families, contractors, tenderers or suppliers to conflict with their work responsibilities
- Be compromised by, or take advantage of, their relationship with learners, families, or other RISE Learning Zone staff
- Receive money from learners or families, give loans, invite or influence a learner or family member to make a will under which they are a beneficiary, executor, or trustee.
- Seek or attempt to seek personal gain by competing with RISE Learning Zone for work / contracts / funding during their employment or within a reasonable time after employment ends. Breaches of this nature are likely to lead to disciplinary and / or legal action.

Where employees have or develop a close personal relationship with another RISE Learning Zone employee or trustee, partner agency or client they must inform their manager and Management Team as soon as possible. This is to ensure that that there is transparency and the potential for any conflict of interest may be dealt with at the earliest opportunity. This information will be treated in confidence and if there is any potential for a conflict of interest to occur, the circumstances will be reviewed by the manager in consultation with the Management Team.

We reserve the right to take action where there is any possibility that an employee's involvement in a close personal relationship with another employee or trustee, partner agency or client could lead to accusations of favouritism, breaches of confidentiality etc. that could have implications for our reputation, service provision to residents, service users, and other stakeholders or to staff. Each case will be reviewed on its individual circumstances. Action taken could include arranging a transfer to another work-base or team, a re-allocation of specific duties, a re-allocation of line management responsibilities or some other appropriate action(s).

To protect learners, families and employees, Rise employees must never form close personal relationships with learners or family members. All such relationships must be always professional. If professional boundaries are crossed disciplinary action will be taken.

Any pre-existing relationships with learners or family members must be declared and discussed with the Management Team and submitted to them. Each case will be reviewed on its individual circumstances and any required action taken will be proportionate to the case.

Employment

When employees encourage their family members and friends to come to work for RISE Learning Zone, certain guidelines need to be followed to avoid misinterpretation or perceptions of favouritism.

Employees must withdraw from any involvement in a recruitment process where they are closely related to or connected to an applicant. Professional relationships or acquaintance with an applicant should not prevent involvement but, in the interests of transparency, this should be declared in the recruitment paperwork and discussed with the Management Team and other recruiting managers as appropriate.

Employees must not be involved in any decisions relating to discipline, pay adjustments or other Management Team related issues which involve a relative, close personal friend or someone with whom they are closely connected (other than to accompany them at a meeting in accordance with the Organisation's policies).

Employees must not directly manage a relative or someone with whom they are closely connected without the prior and documented agreement of the Management Team.

If a member of an employee's family or a close personal friend / someone with whom they are closely connected is or becomes a learner or family member of a learner at RISE Learning Zone, the employee must not use their position to gain any advantage or preferential treatment for them. Such a relationship must be declared to the Management Team, documented on the Declaration of Interest Form and submitted.

Other Employment / Voluntary work

In order to comply with our duty of care obligations under Health and Safety legislation, the Working Time Regulations and to ensure the wellbeing of our employees, staff must inform their manager of any outside employment / self-employment. Such employment will be considered against the potential impact on the individual and their work for RISE Learning Zone.

Any existing self-employment or work (including voluntary work) for another organisation must be declared on the Declaration of Interest Form. If an existing employee is considering employment with another employer or self-employment in addition to their work with RISE

Learning Zone this must be discussed and agreed with their manager. Where there are concerns about potential conflicts of interest

these must be discussed with the Management Team and any appropriate action taken.

No paid work for another employer / self-employment / voluntary work should be undertaken from a RISE Learning Zone work-base, premises or during work time and no use should be made of office facilities (e.g. phones, email, or computers) unless the express written permission of the Management Team has been obtained.

Outside Activities

Under normal circumstances RISE Learning Zone will not interfere with the private lives of its staff unless there is a potential impact on our reputation or operational effectiveness.

We are part of the local education sector and as such we value our public profile. All staff must avoid any action that might bring the organisation into disrepute, even if this is outside of their normal work activities. Activities in or out of work that could jeopardise the standing or reputation of the organisation are likely to result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

RISE Learning Zone is a non-political organisation, and no employee should attempt to promote political views through the organisation. Employees involved in seeking political office should seek the approval of the Management Team, who will not unreasonably withhold approval, although the employee's work must take precedence and there must be no conflict of interest or any detrimental effect on our reputation or the employee's quality of work.

Employees must never allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

Financial Conduct and Conflict of Interest

All financial transactions must be made in accordance with RISE Learning Zone's Financial Regulations. Information regarding the Financial Regulations can be obtained from the Management Team.

Staff must never receive or give loans (no matter how small) to learners, family members or other clients from their own personal money.

It is a serious disciplinary offence, may breach the Bribery Act 2010 and therefore may be a criminal offence, to receive or give gifts, financial or other rewards, such as holidays, extravagant hospitality, etc. in exchange for favours, such as preferential treatment for services, contracts, allocations etc. (Please see the appropriate section below regarding gifts and hospitality).

Tendering, Contractors and Purchasing

Employees must declare to their manager any current or past business or private relationship, with any contractor, consultant, or supplier of RISE Learning Zone. This declaration must be documented on the Declaration of Interest Form and sent to the Management Team.

Employees must always comply with the approved tendering and purchasing procedures and RISE Learning Zone's Financial Regulations when purchasing goods or services. Anti-corruption procedures must always be followed and there must be no suggestion of bribery etc.

Gifts and Hospitality

Customers, clients, or other partner organisations may offer employees gifts or hospitality. Whilst the organisation has no desire to stop deserving employees receiving a reward from a satisfied customer or client, it does recognise the potential for misunderstanding. The organisation also needs to ensure that it abides by the Bribery Act and promotes a culture of honesty and transparency in the practice of receiving gifts and hospitality - whether from customers, clients, or suppliers. It is difficult to make rules to govern every situation, but a good test is whether an ordinary member of the public would be likely to misjudge motives for accepting a gift or hospitality.

With this in mind, no gifts should be accepted other than small promotional gifts such as pens, calendars, or small gifts up to the value of £10.00. Staff must never accept a cash gift. Where a gift of more than the value of £10.00 is accepted, it must be discussed with the Management Team. Gifts (other than small promotional gifts which do not have to be declared / discussed) of less than £10.00 in value should be discussed with the employee's manager and this discussion should be documented in one-to-one notes.

Depending on the nature of the gift it could be retained, given to the organisation to be used or used as a prize in a raffle or competition.

Personal gifts / hospitality must never be solicited.

Personal gifts from learners must never be accepted. If gifts are given and refusal would cause upset such gifts would be shared with the team and declared to the manager.

In order to uphold best practice and ensure that there is no breach of the Bribery Act 2010 no lavish hospitality shall be received, offered, or solicited. Any hospitality must be modest and proportionate and would include, for example, working meals and light refreshments up to the value of £20.00 per person. Any hospitality given or received of less than £20.00 in value should be discussed with the employee's Management Team and this discussion should be documented in one-to-one notes.

Corporate hospitality through attendance at conferences, external meetings, training events, etc. may be accepted and will not normally be declared formally but should be discussed with the Management Team.

Any received or given hospitality that could be valued at more than £20.00 per person must be discussed with the Management Team and declared in the Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Register. Gifts and Hospitality given must also comply with any guidance regarding expenses and / or The Financial Regulations.

If in doubt, employees should consult the Management Team. If there is doubt as to whether something should be declared it is always best to err on the side of caution.

Balancing Confidentiality and Openness

RISE Learning Zone strives to be as open as possible about aspects of work with which the organisation is involved. Staff are encouraged to develop 'transparency' in their work but to balance this with confidentiality in relation to sensitive, personal, financial, or other confidential information.

Information about specific residents, service users, applicants, colleagues, other individuals and commercially, financially, or legally sensitive information must never be discussed openly or shared with a third party unless the employee has express permission as part of their role.

Inappropriate remarks relating to work, residents, customers, or colleagues etc on social networking or other sites are not permitted and are likely to result in disciplinary action. The Organisation has a separate Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy, social media Policy and IT Policy that should be read in conjunction with this Code of Conduct.

Employees must not use any information gained in the course of their work for personal gain or benefit or pass it to others who might gain.

Any media enquiries must be directed to the Management Team in the first instance. They will allocate this responsibility to liaise with the press on behalf of the organisation to a named officer.

Declaration of Interests

All actual or potential conflicts of interest (including financial ones) must be declared to the Management Team at the earliest opportunity and also declared on a Declaration of Interest Form. This includes membership of any organisation not open to the public which has secrecy about its rules, membership, or conduct.

Where a conflict of interest becomes apparent during the course of any work-related meeting that an employee is attending, they should advise those present and take no further part in the

discussion. If they are the sole representative of RISE Learning Zone, they should move to adjourn the meeting so that their place could be taken at a future meeting by another employee.

If there is uncertainty regarding what to declare then staff and managers are advised to err on the side of caution.

Use of Mobile Phones

To prevent a disruptive and distracting environment, Rise expects staff to limit the use of mobile phones during the school day, particularly in the presence of learners.

Rise expects:

- Staff to keep mobile phones out of the sight of learners as much as possible.
- Staff not to use mobile phones for personal use during the school day.
- Mobile phones are not permitted when driving a Rise vehicle.
- Personal mobile phones should not be used for taking photos or recording videos inside the workplace.
- Mobile phones are not permitted to record confidential workplace information or documents.
- Personal mobile phones to be on ‘silent’ mode.

Mobile phones can be a useful tool in the workplace. Scenarios when mobile phone usage is acceptable in the workplace include:

- Accessing work diaries/calendars, emails, when collaborating with colleagues.
- Access tools such as calculators or memo recorders.
- Carrying out urgent research
- To communicate with others regarding work-related business, including receiving important updates on messaging services from managers.
- For use in an emergency.

Rise Learning Zone provides two-way radios for staff communication, during the school day. These should be the preferred method of communication and utilised to keep both leaners & staff safe. Radios will be assigned during the morning briefings. Any issues with the equipment should be reported to the management team immediately.

Learners are not permitted to use mobile phones during the Rise school day; staff are expected to model this behaviour.

Criminal Charges

All posts with RISE Learning Zone are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Employees who are barred from working with children and / or vulnerable adults must inform the Management Team immediately so that appropriate action (which may include redeployment or dismissal) can be taken. Failure to inform will result in dismissal.

If an employee is facing criminal charges or is convicted of a criminal offence, they must inform the Management Team immediately. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Breaches of the Code

Breaches of the Code or failure to report known breaches are likely to result in disciplinary action.

If staff become aware of breaches of this Code, they should report this to the Management Team who will ensure that matters raised in good faith are investigated without the employee being penalised.

If employees believe that the matter about which they are concerned falls under the specific provisions of the Whistle Blowing Procedure they should report the matter in accordance with the provisions of the Whistle Blowing Procedure which can be found in the staff handbook or on the Cloud Drive.

Other Policies, Documents and Procedures

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures from RISE Learning Zone:

- Equality and Diversity Policy Employee Handbook
- Financial Regulations
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy PR and Communications Document
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policies and Procedures social media Policy.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the latest version of DfE *Working Together to Safeguard Children.*

Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years by the enior leadership team, or as necessary.