



Staff Code of Conduct

Date approved: September 2015
Approved by: Senior Management Team
Review date: As required
Group Executive Lead: N/A
Responsible SMT: Head of Human Resources
Accessible to Students: No

1. Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:

Newcastle College	Yes
Group Services	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Yes
West Lancashire College	No
Kidderminster College	No
Intraining	No
Rathbone	No

2. Applicability to Organisation

This staff code of conduct applies to:-

Newcastle College	Yes
Group Services	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Yes
West Lancashire College	No
Kidderminster College	No
Intraining	No
Rathbone	No

3. Scope and Purpose

This guidance aims to help staff understand the standards of conduct expected of them. It provides guidance on how to reduce the risk of conduct which could be mistakenly interpreted as improper or conduct that may lead to allegations being made against a member of staff.

Principles of the code of conduct:

1. The welfare and safety of our staff and learners is paramount.
2. NCG aims to provide the highest level of experience to our learners, clients and colleagues.
3. Staff take responsibility for their own actions and act in a transparent and ethical way.

This document supplements but does not replace or supersede any established policy or procedures.

4. Linked Policies

Alcohol and substance misuse policy
Attendance policy
Capability policy
Child protection policy
Criminal records policy
Disclosure policy
De-escalation policy
Staff Disciplinary policy
Grievance policy
NCG Financial regulations policy
IT Acceptable use policy
Respect and consideration for others policy
Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy

5. Linked Procedures

Attendance procedure
Capability procedure
Child protection procedure
Criminal records procedure
De-escalation policy
Disclosure procedure
Staff Disciplinary procedure
Grievance procedure
NCG Financial regulations procedure
IT Acceptable use procedure
Respect and consideration for others procedure
Safeguarding vulnerable adults procedure

5. Location and Access

This code of conduct can be accessed via SharePoint: College Information: College Policies and Strategies.

6. Person Responsible

Head of Human Resources.

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1.0 Conduct Required

The following provides guidance to staff on what is expected of them; it is not meant as an exhaustive list. The guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is or is not appropriate behaviour for staff in all circumstances.

There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff are required to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the learner / NCG which are not covered by this guidance. In all cases, staff are expected to make judgements that are reasonable, practical and safe.

1.1 Dress and Appearance of Staff

All staff represent NCG, whether in the office, classroom, external event or meetings. Staff are, therefore, expected to present an appropriate impression at all times and should dress and present themselves in clothing that is appropriate to their role.

In some roles within NCG, staff will be provided with and are required to wear uniform and/or Personal Protective Equipment.

Examples of inappropriate clothing may be attire that is:

- revealing or sexually provocative
- offensive or likely to cause embarrassment
- displays contentious/ discriminatory slogans

1.2 ID Badge and Lanyard

Staff must wear (or where this is not possible, due to the job role, must carry) their staff Identification badge and Lanyard at all times whilst on NCG premises to identify themselves as a member of staff.

1.3 Criminal Offences

In line with the Criminal Records policy, staff must notify the Human Resources Department if they are charged or convicted of an offence during their employment. The notification must take place at the earliest opportunity to allow an appropriate assessment to be taken.

1.4 Alcohol and Substance Misuse

Staff should not attend work or represent NCG under the influence of drugs (including legal highs) and/or alcohol.

If staff attend a social event organised by, or as a representative of, NCG, where alcohol is available, they are reminded that they should act responsibly and appropriately to the circumstances.

1.5 Smoking at Work

NCG operates a no smoking policy in all of its buildings; this includes the use of e-cigarettes.

Staff who wish to smoke should be outside the boundaries of NCG premises or, where available, use a designated smoking area.

It is not appropriate for staff to smoke whilst they are with a learner.

1.6 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

All staff are expected to complete the online mandatory training units every 2 years.

Staff are responsible for completing their annual CPD hours and are encouraged to utilise the available opportunities on Development Days.

For funded programmes/courses staff, must comply with the Funding/Learning agreements in place.

1.7 Personal Relationships at Work (with other members of staff)

Where a personal relationship overlaps into a working relationship, staff must ensure that they do not leave themselves open to allegations or commit acts of impropriety, bias and/or abuse of authority.

Personal relationships in this context refer to:

- a family relationship
- a sexual/intimate relationship

All such relationships should be transparent and it is recommended that staff obtain guidance from the HR Department or their line manager.

Where a personal relationship currently exists or develops between members of staff, where a line management arrangement exists (whether it is an immediate or higher management reporting line), it must be declared to the Head of Human Resources who will consider the risks (e.g. unfair advantage or disadvantage) . If necessary an arrangement might be introduced to enable the current line management process to continue. NCG may consider a change to line management arrangements if appropriate.

Staff who are uncertain about whether they should take action regarding a personal relationship are invited to seek advice, in confidence, from the HR Department.

1.8 Working Outside of NCG

Employees who wish to work, either paid or unpaid, outside of NCG are required to request permission from their Director of School/Service (or Principal for NSFC) by completing a 'Request to undertake work outside of the College' form. This is to ensure that any additional employment or engagement does not impact on the performance of duties or conflict with the interests of NCG.

NCG also has a duty of care towards our staff under the Working Time Directive to consider the overall working hours of our staff.

1.9 Conflicts of Interest

Staff must at all times act in the best interest of NCG. Business decisions must be based on sound judgement and not on personal interest or gain. Staff must declare to their line manager if they have personal conflict of interest or if they believe one may arise.

The following are examples of areas of concern (this list is not exhaustive):

- employment, consulting or any other business relationship with a competitor, customer or supplier
- representing NCG in a business arrangement if they or a family member have a financial interest
- involvement in the recruitment and selection of a friend or family member

1.10 Gifts and Hospitality

Staff must adhere to NCG Financial regulations.

It is recognised that staff occasionally receive promotional materials such as calendars and diaries from suppliers. Gifts of this description may be accepted providing they are non-cash and of low value.

If a gift at an estimated value of more than £20 is offered it should always be tactfully refused. Where this may cause significant offence or embarrassment, gifts may be accepted (with consent from the Head of Division) and subsequently donated to a charity of NCG's choice.

Offers of holidays, hotel accommodation, and money must always be refused. The relevant line manager must be informed that the offer was made and refused.

The giving and/or accepting of bribes will not be tolerated.

All staff are required to obtain approval before accepting any form of Corporate Hospitality which is offered to them. Approval must be sought from their line manager or, where the value of the Corporate Hospitality is likely to be over £100, from the Head of Division.

This excludes the classes of hospitality detailed below:

- a) Normal working lunches or refreshments provided during a business visit.
- b) Hospitality extended to employees attending a Company approved seminar, conference or other external event, provided that such hospitality is extended to all who are in attendance.
- c) Free seminars, talks or workshops, provided that they are free to all in attendance and are not provided solely for employees of the Company.

An accurate record must be kept of all gifts, and/or corporate hospitality offered to NCG or employees in line with NCG's Financial Regulations.

1.11 Compliance

Staff are required to comply with NCG/College Policies and Procedures.

Staff must not submit any information that is, in anyway, misleading, inaccurate, falsified, or distorted.

1.12 IT Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media

Staff are required to read and confirm their understanding of the NCG IT Acceptable Use Policy prior to using any NCG IT systems.

Staff are reminded that they must not make any degrading/defamatory comments or similar remarks online, regarding NCG, other employees or learners.

1.13 Confidentiality

Staff must not use, for their own purpose (or for any purposes other than those of NCG) or divulge to any person, corporation, company or other organisation whatsoever any confidential information belonging to NCG.

Staff who have any concerns must raise them through the appropriate internal channels.

1.14 Personal Issues

NCG has processes and procedures in place to support staff to deal with family emergencies. Where the situation is of a personal nature, but not an emergency, staff are reminded that they should deal with the situation within their own time and not during working hours.

Personal calls or communications , incoming or outgoing, must be kept to an absolute minimum within working time and ideally, where possible, restricted to emergency situations only.

1.15 Professional Behaviour

Those entrusted to supervise, manage and teach others are role models, who have a particular responsibility to maintain standards of professional behaviour by demonstrating positive behaviours and dealing timely and effectively with conduct which has fallen below that which is expected.

Equality and Diversity

Staff must promote Equality and Diversity without prejudice or stereotyping and challenge discriminatory behaviour.

Respect and Courtesy

Staff act with self-control, tolerance and use appropriate language and behaviour in dealing with learners.

Staff must treat learners and colleagues with dignity, respect and courtesy.

Honesty and Integrity

NCG promotes a positive working environment where staff act with integrity and are open and truthful in their dealings with learners and colleagues.

Staff must not knowingly make any false, misleading or inaccurate oral or written statements in connection with any NCG activity.

One to One Situations with Learners

It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential meetings must take place with learners. Staff, where possible, should ensure that another staff member is aware that the meeting is taking place. Any such meeting should be on NCG premises unless express permission from the line manager has been given to hold it in another venue.

Educational Visits / Activities

Extra-curricular and learning enhancement/ enrichment activities are encouraged. Staff must ensure that all activities are assessed and approved in advance by the School or Service.

Staff should take extra care in less formal situations and remember they are in a position of trust and have a duty of care.

Transporting Students

Whenever possible and practicable, it is advisable that transport is not undertaken in private vehicles. It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to anyone under 18 years outside of their normal working duties, unless it is an emergency situation where not to give a lift may place the child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager of NCG.

It is not appropriate for staff to travel in a car with just one learner. If there are extenuating circumstances that make it unavoidable, the employee must inform their line manager.

Social Contact

Staff should never make contact with a learner outside of NCG for the purpose of friendship.

It is recognised that there may be occasions where accidental or reasonable social contact may be unavoidable e.g. meeting students at social venues that are open to the general public such as shops. In such circumstances, staff should be mindful at all times of their professional relationship with the learner.

Communications with Learners - including Use of Technology

Communications between learners and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text, e-mails, blogs, social media etc.

All communications are required to be transparent and may be open to scrutiny.

Sexual Contact

Intimate or sexual relationships between staff and learners will be regarded as a breach of trust.

Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also wholly unacceptable.

Any staff member who is in a relationship with an adult, who subsequently becomes a learner, must report this relationship to their line manager prior to the learner commencing their course.

Physical Contact

Some staff will work in certain settings i.e. sports, drama etc. that require some physical contact with their learner. Such activity should always be carried out in accordance with the existing regulations and best practice.

It is, however, appropriate to have physical contact with blind learners for the following reasons - mobility, sighted guidance, familiarisation in class room environments and around campus, and practical activities. It is also best practice to use a light tap on a learner's forearm if they are profoundly deaf to gain their attention.

Physical contact should only take place when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment and at all times the learner should be made aware of why the contact is necessary and appropriate for the activity that is being undertaken.

Physical Restraint

Staff must adhere to the De-escalation Policy.

The use of physical intervention should where possible, be avoided. It should only be used to manage a learner's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to you, the individual or to others. Under no circumstance should physical force or intervention be used as a form of punishment.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Staff must exercise care to ensure that no allegations of favouritism can be made against them. Any selection processes which concern learners or staff must be fair and use clear agreed criteria. Care must be taken to ensure that staff do not accept gifts that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There may be occasions where learners/guardians/staff may wish to pass on small token of appreciation to staff, however it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value from an individual contributor.