

CLEARSPACE LEARNING LTD

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Company Registration:	15950890
Policy Owner:	Stuart Knox (Director)
Version:	2.0
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Review Date:	September 2027
Approved by:	Stuart Knox, Director

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards expected of all adults working for or with Clearspace Learning. It provides clear guidance on appropriate behaviour, professional boundaries, and conduct to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children while maintaining professional integrity.

1.2 Who This Applies To

This Code applies to:

- Stuart Knox (Director/Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- All future employees, tutors, and contractors
- Volunteers working with Clearspace Learning
- Anyone working on behalf of or representing Clearspace Learning

Note: While Clearspace Learning currently operates as a solo practitioner (Stuart Knox), this Code sets professional standards for current and future staff.

1.3 Why This Matters

For Children:

- Ensures they are safe and protected
- Creates consistent, predictable professional relationships
- Maintains appropriate boundaries
- Models respectful, ethical behaviour

For Staff:

- Provides clear expectations and guidance
- Protects staff from allegations or misunderstandings
- Supports professional development
- Creates a culture of integrity and excellence

For Parents and Partners:

- Demonstrates professionalism and accountability
- Builds trust and confidence
- Shows commitment to safeguarding
- Provides recourse if standards not met

1.4 Legal Framework

This Code is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (Section 67 - sexual communication with a child)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

2. CORE PRINCIPLES

All staff are expected to uphold these core principles:

2.1 The Child's Welfare is Paramount

- Every decision and action must prioritise children's safety and wellbeing
- Children's interests come before staff convenience or preferences
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Staff must act with professional integrity at all times

2.2 Professional Boundaries

- Staff maintain appropriate professional relationships with children and families
- Personal and professional lives are kept separate
- Staff recognise the power imbalance in adult-child relationships
- Boundaries protect both children and staff

2.3 Respect and Dignity

- All children, families, and colleagues are treated with respect
- Diversity is valued and discrimination is not tolerated
- Professional language and behaviour are maintained at all times
- Individual differences and needs are recognised and respected

2.4 Honesty and Integrity

- Staff are truthful and transparent in all dealings
- Mistakes are acknowledged and learned from
- Professional standards are maintained even when unsupervised
- Staff model the behaviour we expect from children

2.5 Accountability

- Staff take responsibility for their actions
- Professional conduct is maintained at all times
- Concerns are raised appropriately
- Standards are upheld consistently

3. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

3.1 Appearance and Dress Code

Standard Expected:

- Clean, neat, and professional appearance
- Clothing appropriate for activities (may get messy in STEM projects)
- Clothes suitable for working with children (nothing revealing, offensive, or inappropriate)

Appropriate:

- Smart casual (jeans, polo shirts, casual trousers, comfortable shoes)
- Practical clothing for outdoor/active sessions
- Clearspace branded clothing (if provided)

Inappropriate:

- Revealing or sexually provocative clothing
- Clothing with offensive slogans, images, or political messages
- Excessively casual (e.g., pyjamas, beachwear)
- Strong perfume/cologne (sensory consideration for students)

Special Considerations:

- Mobile/outdoor work requires practical, comfortable clothing
- Safety footwear for certain activities (no flip-flops in workshop)
- Cultural and religious dress respected

3.2 Punctuality and Reliability

Staff must:

- Arrive on time for all sessions and meetings
- Plan journey time to account for traffic/delays
- Notify parents and management immediately if running late (call/text)
- Provide as much notice as possible if unable to work (illness, emergency)
- Be reliable and consistent (children need predictability)

If Unavailable:

- Contact Director (Stuart Knox) immediately: 07986 622049
- Contact families directly if session needs rescheduling
- Provide medical certificate if absent 5+ days
- No unauthorised absence - always inform management

3.3 Communication

With Children:

- Speak respectfully, calmly, and clearly
- Use age-appropriate language
- Listen actively and value children's views
- Never shout, mock, or speak sarcastically to children
- Use child's preferred name and pronouns
- Be patient when children are processing or struggling to express themselves

With Parents/Carers:

- Professional, friendly, and respectful tone
- Honest and transparent communication
- Timely responses to queries (within 24 hours on working days)
- Regular updates on child's progress and wellbeing
- Confidentiality maintained (don't discuss other children)
- Clear boundaries (professional relationship, not friendship)

With Colleagues/Partners:

- Respectful and collaborative communication
- Share information appropriately
- Constructive feedback, not criticism
- Professional language in emails, calls, messages

Written Communication:

- Professional tone and grammar
- Proofread before sending
- Use business email/phone for work communication
- No text speak or excessive emojis in professional communication

3.4 Attitude and Behaviour

Staff must:

- Be positive, patient, and encouraging
- Model the behaviour we expect from children
- Remain calm under pressure

- Show resilience when faced with challenges
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and teaching
- Be flexible and adaptable to children's needs

Staff must not:

- Complain about work, children, or families in front of students
- Display frustration, anger, or impatience with children
- Use work time for personal business
- Discuss personal problems with children
- Make negative comments about other professionals or schools

3.5 Use of Language

Acceptable:

- Respectful, encouraging, and supportive language
- Descriptive praise ("You worked really hard on that")
- Trauma-informed language ("What do you need?" vs. "Calm down")
- Humour that is appropriate and not at anyone's expense

Unacceptable:

- Swearing or using offensive language
- Sarcasm or mockery
- Shouting or aggressive tone
- Discriminatory language (racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.)
- Sexually explicit or suggestive language
- Threatening language

4. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

4.1 Duty to Safeguard

All staff must:

- Read, understand, and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complete safeguarding training (induction and refreshers)
- Be alert to signs and indicators of abuse
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL (Stuart Knox)
- Never investigate concerns themselves
- Maintain confidentiality (share information only on need-to-know basis)

4.2 Recognising Abuse

Staff must:

- Know the four main types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect)
- Understand specific safeguarding issues (CSE, CCE, FGM, radicalisation, etc.)
- Exercise professional curiosity
- Trust instincts - "it could happen here"
- Never assume someone else will report

4.3 Responding to Disclosures

If a child discloses abuse:

- Listen carefully and take it seriously
- Remain calm and reassuring
- Do NOT promise confidentiality
- Do NOT ask leading questions
- Record exactly what was said (child's words)
- Report to DSL immediately
- See Safeguarding Policy, What To Do If You Have A Concern for full procedures

4.4 Physical Contact with Children

General Principle: Minimise physical contact; only when necessary and appropriate.

Acceptable Physical Contact:

- First aid or medical assistance
- Comfort if child is distressed (side-by-side, brief, child-initiated)
- Preventing immediate danger (restraint only in genuine emergency)
- Assisting with physical disability or mobility needs
- High-fives or fist bumps (brief, appropriate)
- Demonstrating a technique (e.g., showing how to hold a tool)

Physical contact should always be:

- In the child's best interests
- Open and transparent (not hidden)
- With child's consent (unless emergency)
- Brief and appropriate
- Documented if intimate care or restraint

Unacceptable Physical Contact:

- Any contact of a sexual nature
- Rough physical play or horseplay
- Unnecessary or prolonged physical contact
- Contact that makes child uncomfortable
- Tickling
- Kissing or cuddling

Special Considerations:

- Some neurodivergent children are touch-averse (respect this)
- Some children may seek inappropriate physical contact (redirect gently)
- Always respect a child's "no" regarding physical contact

4.5 One-to-One Situations

Clearspace operates primarily as 1:1 provision. To maintain safety:

Risk Management:

- Follow Working Alone Protocols (Safeguarding Policy, Appendix F)
- Parents present during home sessions where possible
- Sessions in public areas when not in homes
- Deputy DSL (Dr David Bromiley) covers if Stuart is unavailable
- Parents, carers or the commissioning school know when and where sessions take place
- Clear escape routes planned

Professional Conduct:

- Door remains open if working in room in home
- Position yourself where you can be seen by others
- Never work in isolated locations without notification
- Avoid putting yourself in compromising situations
- If child behaves inappropriately, end session and report

If Alone in Vehicle:

- See Vehicle Safety (Health & Safety Policy, Section 7)
- Child sits in back seat where possible
- Journey is direct (no detours)
- Parent informed of route and timings

4.6 Photography and Video

Parental consent required before taking any photos or videos.

Acceptable Use (with consent):

- Recording educational activities for assessment

- Documenting projects and learning
- Creating portfolios to share with parents

Unacceptable Use:

- Photos/videos without consent
- Images of children in states of undress
- Images in private areas (bathrooms)
- Personal social media posting (unless separate specific consent)
- Sharing with anyone other than parents

Protocols:

- Use only Clearspace devices (never personal phones)
- Store securely (encrypted, password-protected)
- Delete when no longer needed
- See Online Safety Policy and the Information Sharing and Confidentiality section of the Safeguarding Policy for full details

5. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

5.1 Relationships with Children

Professional relationship means:

- Warm, supportive, but boundaried
- Not a friend, family member, or peer
- Adult maintains responsibility and authority
- Relationship exists solely for child's benefit

Staff must:

- Maintain professional distance
- Be friendly but not friends
- Avoid favouritism or special relationships
- Treat all children with equal respect and fairness
- Never exploit the trust children place in them

Staff must not:

- Develop personal or sexual relationships with students (illegal and gross misconduct)
- Share personal problems or seek emotional support from children
- Discuss their personal/romantic life with children
- Give children their personal contact details
- Contact children outside of professional context
- Meet children outside of work context (except planned educational activities)

5.2 Relationships with Families

Professional boundaries with parents:

- Friendly, respectful, but professional
- Not personal friends or socialising partners
- Focus remains on child's education and wellbeing

Staff must:

- Maintain professional communication
- Be transparent about child's progress (honest but sensitive)
- Respect confidentiality (don't discuss other families)
- Be available during work hours via professional contact
- Decline inappropriate requests or gifts

Staff must not:

- Develop personal friendships with families
- Socialise with families outside of work
- Accept or request loans, gifts of significant value
- Provide personal phone number or add to personal social media
- Discuss their personal life in detail

Exception: Small tokens of appreciation (e.g., chocolate, card) are acceptable if modest value (<£20).

5.3 Social Media and Online Conduct

Staff must NEVER:

- Friend, follow, or connect with students on personal social media
- Contact students via personal social media, email, or phone
- Share personal mobile number or email with students
- Post photos or information about students on personal accounts
- Engage in private messaging with students on any platform
- Search for students on social media

Staff must:

- Use only business contact for work: info@clearspacelearning.com / 07986 622049
- Set personal social media accounts to private
- Not post anything that could bring Clearspace into disrepute
- Not post inappropriate content (offensive, discriminatory, illegal)
- Be aware that online conduct reflects on professional reputation

If Student Tries to Contact Staff on Social Media:

- Do not respond or accept request
- Screenshot evidence
- Report to DSL (Stuart Knox)
- Contact student's parents
- See Online Safety Policy Section 8 for full guidance

5.4 Gifts and Hospitality

Receiving Gifts:

- Small tokens from children (handmade cards, drawings) are acceptable
- Modest gifts from parents (under £20) may be accepted (chocolate, coffee, etc.)
- Gifts of significant value (£20+) must be politely declined or reported to Director
- Cash gifts should be declined
- Declare any gifts received to Director

Giving Gifts:

- Small rewards related to learning (stickers, certificates) are acceptable
- End-of-year small gifts may be appropriate (book, educational game)
- Must be appropriate and modest value
- Never give personal or intimate items
- Never give gifts secretly or ask child to keep gift secret
- Inform parents if giving any gift

Hospitality:

- Do not accept invitations to family events (birthdays, holidays, etc.)
- Do not invite children/families to personal events
- Maintain professional boundaries

6. TECHNOLOGY USE

6.1 Use of Clearspace Devices

Staff must:

- Use Clearspace devices for work purposes only
- Maintain security (passwords, encryption)
- Report loss or theft immediately
- Keep devices updated and maintained
- Not download inappropriate content

Staff must not:

- Use work devices for personal business
- Share passwords or access with others
- Store personal files on work devices
- Access inappropriate websites or content

6.2 Use of Personal Devices

Personal Mobile Phones:

- Not used during sessions with children (except emergencies)
- Never used to photograph/video children
- Personal calls/texts on breaks only

Personal Laptops/Tablets:

- Should not be used for work (use work devices)
- If necessary, must be secure and professional

See Online Safety Policy Section 8 for comprehensive guidance.

7. DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

7.1 Equality and Non-Discrimination

Staff must:

- Treat all children and families with equal respect
- Challenge discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping
- Promote diversity and inclusion
- Make reasonable adjustments for SEND
- Respect protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.)

Staff must not:

- Discriminate against anyone based on protected characteristics
- Make racist, sexist, homophobic, or discriminatory comments
- Stereotype or make assumptions about children or families
- Treat children differently based on irrelevant factors

7.2 Respecting Diversity

Staff must:

- Respect cultural and religious differences
- Use child's preferred name and pronouns
- Be sensitive to family structures and backgrounds
- Avoid assumptions about lifestyles or beliefs
- Create inclusive environment

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

8.1 Confidentiality

Staff must:

- Keep information about children and families confidential
- Only share information on a need-to-know basis
- Not discuss children with people outside of work
- Not gossip about children or families
- Follow Data Protection Policy procedures

Information may be shared when:

- Required for safeguarding purposes
- Necessary for child's education and wellbeing
- With parental consent (in most cases)
- Required by law or court order

8.2 Data Protection

Staff must:

- Handle personal data in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Keep records secure (locked cabinets, encrypted devices, passwords)
- Not remove confidential information without authorisation
- Dispose of confidential waste securely (shred)
- Report data breaches immediately

Staff must not:

- Access information they don't need for their role
- Share login credentials
- Leave confidential documents visible or unattended
- Discuss confidential information in public places

See Data Protection Policy for full details.

9. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLBEING

9.1 Health and Safety Responsibilities

Staff must:

- Follow all health and safety policies and procedures
- Conduct risk assessments for activities and locations
- Maintain safe working environment
- Report hazards and incidents immediately
- Use equipment safely and appropriately
- Follow first aid and emergency procedures

9.2 Substance Use

Staff must not:

- Attend work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours
- Smoke or vape around children
- Store or use illegal substances
- Bring alcohol or drugs to work premises (including vehicle)

Prescribed Medication:

- If taking prescription medication that affects ability to work, inform Director
- Take medication as prescribed
- Ensure medication is stored securely away from children

9.3 Fitness to Work

Staff must:

- Only work when fit and well
- Inform Director if unwell and unable to work safely
- Follow Clearspace absence reporting procedures
- Not work if too ill to perform duties safely

Infectious Illness:

- Do not work if suffering from infectious illness
- Follow exclusion periods (e.g., 48 hours after vomiting/diarrhoea)
- Inform Director immediately if diagnosed with notifiable disease

10. VEHICLE USE

If using vehicles to transport students or travel for work:

10.1 Vehicle Standards

Staff must ensure:

- Valid driving licence
- Vehicle is roadworthy (MOT, insurance, tax)
- Business insurance covers child transportation
- Vehicle is clean and safe
- Regular maintenance

10.2 Transporting Students

Staff must:

- Have written parental consent for transportation
- Follow Vehicle Safety (Health & Safety Policy, Section 7)
- Ensure child wears seatbelt
- Drive safely and responsibly
- Avoid distractions (phones, eating while driving)
- Plan journey and have emergency contact details

Staff must not:

- Transport children without parental consent
- Make unauthorised stops or detours
- Use phone while driving
- Play inappropriate music or content
- Transport more children than seatbelts available

11. ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND SMOKING

11.1 Alcohol

Staff must not:

- Consume alcohol before or during work
- Attend work under the influence of alcohol
- Smell of alcohol at work

11.2 Drugs

Staff must not:

- Use illegal drugs
- Attend work under the influence of drugs (illegal or legal)
- Be in possession of illegal drugs

Legal drugs (prescription):

- If prescription medication affects work performance, inform Director
- Take as prescribed

11.3 Smoking and Vaping

Staff must not:

- Smoke or vape around children
- Smoke or vape in Clearspace vehicle
- Smoke or vape in students' homes (unless explicit permission from family)
- Take smoking breaks during sessions with children

Acceptable:

- Smoking/vaping on breaks away from children

12. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

12.1 Financial Conduct

Staff must:

- Handle money and transactions honestly
- Keep accurate records of expenses
- Submit receipts for reimbursement
- Not use Clearspace resources for personal gain

Staff must not:

- Steal money or property
- Falsify expense claims
- Accept bribes or kickbacks
- Use Clearspace funds for personal purposes
- Engage in fraud or financial misconduct

12.2 Conflicts of Interest

Staff must:

- Declare any conflicts of interest to Director
- Not place personal interests above child's interests
- Be transparent about any external work or relationships

Examples of conflicts:

- Tutoring Clearspace students privately (must be declared)
- Family member being a student
- Financial interest in supplier or partner organisation

13. RAISING CONCERNS (WHISTLEBLOWING)

13.1 Duty to Report

Staff must report:

- Safeguarding concerns about children
- Concerns about staff conduct
- Health and safety hazards
- Breaches of policies or procedures
- Illegal or unethical behaviour

13.2 How to Report

Internal:

- Report to Stuart Knox (Director/DSL): 07986 622049 / info@clearspacelearning.com

External (if cannot report internally):

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - see Safeguarding Policy for contacts
- Police (if criminal activity)
- Ofsted

Protection:

- Staff who whistleblow in good faith are protected from detriment
- No staff member will be penalised for raising genuine concerns
- See Safeguarding Policy, Complaints and Whistleblowing for full guidance

14. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

14.1 Training

Staff are expected to:

- Attend all required training (safeguarding, SEND, health & safety, etc.)
- Complete training on time
- Apply learning in practice
- Engage with ongoing CPD
- Keep up-to-date with sector developments

Required Training:

- Safeguarding and child protection (induction and annual refresher)
- SEND awareness
- Health and safety
- Data protection
- First aid (if designated first aider)

14.2 Reflection and Improvement

Staff should:

- Reflect on practice regularly
- Seek feedback and supervision
- Identify areas for development
- Set professional goals
- Learn from mistakes

15. CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

15.1 Personal Conduct

Staff should be aware:

- Personal conduct outside work can impact professional reputation
- Clearspace Learning can take action if outside conduct brings organisation into disrepute
- Criminal convictions or cautions must be reported to Director

Staff should not:

- Engage in illegal activity
- Behave in ways that undermine trust and confidence
- Post inappropriate content on social media
- Associate with individuals or organisations that pose risk to children

15.2 Social Media

Staff must:

- Ensure personal social media accounts are private
- Not post inappropriate, offensive, or illegal content
- Not post about Clearspace, students, or families
- Be aware their online presence reflects on professional role

16. CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THIS CODE

16.1 Minor Breaches

Examples: Lateness, dress code violations, minor communication issues

Consequences:

- Informal discussion and reminder
- Guidance and support to improve
- Monitoring of improvement

16.2 Serious Breaches

Examples: Safeguarding concerns, discrimination, inappropriate behaviour with children, breach of confidentiality

Consequences:

- Formal investigation
- Disciplinary action (may include dismissal)
- Referral to LADO (if safeguarding concern)

- Police involvement (if criminal)
- DBS barring referral (if harm to children)

16.3 Gross Misconduct

Examples: Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of children; serious breach of safeguarding; criminal activity; serious breach of trust

Consequences:

- Immediate suspension
- Police involvement
- Summary dismissal (instant termination)
- DBS barring referral
- Professional body notification (e.g., Teaching Regulation Agency)

16.4 Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation is made against a staff member:

- Follow procedures in Safeguarding Policy, Allegations Against Staff
- LADO contacted immediately
- No internal investigation until LADO advises
- Staff member may be suspended (neutral act, not assumption of guilt)
- Fair investigation process
- Support provided to accused staff member

17. DECLARATION AND AGREEMENT

17.1 Staff Declaration

All staff must read, understand, and sign this Code of Conduct.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Staff Code of Conduct
- I agree to abide by the standards and expectations set out in this Code
- I understand that breaching this Code may result in disciplinary action
- I will raise concerns if I witness behaviour that breaches this Code
- I understand my safeguarding responsibilities

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

17.2 Annual Renewal

Staff must re-read and re-sign this Code annually as part of policy review.

18. RELATED POLICIES

This Code of Conduct should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- SEND Policy

19. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually (September 2027) or in response to:

- Legislative changes
- Serious incidents
- Learning from reviews or complaints
- Organisational changes

POLICY APPROVAL

This Staff Code of Conduct has been reviewed and approved by:

Stuart Knox

Director

Clearspace Learning Ltd

Date: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Company Registration: 15950890

Contact: info@clearspacelearning.com | 07986 622049

Website: www.clearspacelearning.com