



# A Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice

**At St Piers and Young Epilepsy, the welfare of our students is paramount. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and adults at risk and we expect all staff (including Trustees, Governors and casual and agency staff), volunteers and student placements, with no exception, to share this commitment.**

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all our students are cared for appropriately and safely and that they are protected from harm and have their wellbeing promoted.

We trust in our staff and expect that they will always behave appropriately whilst working with and on behalf of the organisation. However, we are also aware that in the environment in which we work, the vulnerability of our students and the manner in which we work is associated with higher risks of maltreatment, exploitation and abuse.

People working here are in a position of trust and it is therefore crucial that all staff act within the policies and procedures of the organisation. You will be seen as a role model and a person in a position of trust and are expected to act appropriately.

**The following is, therefore, a code of appropriate conduct for all adults working in or on behalf of St Piers and Young Epilepsy. This is not however an exhaustive list as staff are expected to exercise their professional judgements and act in the best interests of the students in all situations whilst at work. The expectation is that you read and understand this practice agreement and adhere to it, as it aligns to our statutory duty of care to children, young people and adults at risk.**

This will ensure that everyone is protected by the organisation and that the wellbeing of staff and students is central to what we do.

The Employee handbook and relevant policies and procedures also give clarity about boundaries, processes and practice, which helps to create a safe and caring environment for students and staff.

**Where a person is deemed or alleged to be acting in a way contrary to this agreement, the organisation will be obliged to invoke the Disciplinary Procedure to investigate and act on the allegations and/or the conduct.**



## 1. Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Staff must:

- 1.1 Adhere to all our policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 1.2 Treat all students, colleagues and stakeholders with dignity and respect at all times.
- 1.3 Always act, and be seen to act, in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is of the highest priority. **This includes intervening if a student is suffering or about to suffer harm or abuse.**
- 1.4 Behave in a professional, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner at all times and in line with professional responsibilities and British Values.
- 1.5 Have regard for our vision, mission and values and not do or say anything that may bring the organisation in to disrepute.
- 1.6 Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children or for adults at risk.
- 1.7 Help to create and maintain a culture of openness and support. The safeguarding culture in St Piers and Young Epilepsy is exercised in part, through positive and respectful relationships between staff, where professional challenge and curiosity are welcomed.
- 1.8 Maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their work and be accountable for their behaviour and actions.
- 1.9 Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any student in their care. This includes keeping them safe and protecting them from abuse. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.
- 1.10 Provide a good example and be a 'positive role model' to the students.
- 1.11 Maintain professional boundaries with both colleagues and students and adhere to the guidance produced by the Safeguarding Team regarding Professional Boundaries.
- 1.12 Build positive, supportive and caring relationships with all students which promote independence, safety and learning.
- 1.13 Never let their relationships with students, parents or colleagues impact on their obligation to inform the Safeguarding Team if they have concerns about a student.
- 1.14 Act in a way that creates a culture of equality and treats people fairly. We celebrate diversity and staff should work with colleagues and students to engender respect and acceptance.
- 1.15 Seek guidance from a manager if they do not feel they are in a fit state to perform their role- this includes symptoms from taking medication, being under the influence of any substance or alcohol or suffering from any mental health condition.
- 1.16 Always behave in a legal and safe manner.
- 1.17 Never give or receive gifts unless known and agreed by their line manager.



1.18 Always encourage students to act in a legal, proper and safe manner.

1.19 Never make inappropriate remarks or jokes of a personal, sexual, racial, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature about anyone.

1.20 Never be in a state of undress for any reason or during any activity in front of students.

1.21 Inform a senior manager if they have or are undertaking any services outside of St Piers and Young Epilepsy services, for parents/carers of students. This is actively discouraged in order to ensure professionals boundaries are not blurred outside of your contract with Young Epilepsy/St Piers.

1.22 Never abuse their 'position of trust' for any exploitation of students or their families.

1.23 Where there is a need for transportation, this must always be pre-planned with a manager. Staff should always transport a student in a vehicle with another member of staff present, and with the relevant risk assessment and required documentation in place. If this is not possible, a risk assessment must be in place for lone working travel with staff and this must be signed off by a manager.

1.24 Staff need to be sensitive, respectful and responsive to the diversity of beliefs, practices, cultural and linguistic needs of the students, their families and professionals who use our services.

1.25 Staff must report any safeguarding concerns they have to the Lead or Deputy DSL for their area. Failure to do so or act on the advice of the DSL may result in more formal action.

1.26 Staff must record any safeguarding concerns on MyConcern® after discussion with the DSL in a timely manner. The report should be factual and in line with user guidelines and advice from the DSL.

1.27 Staff must be prepared to support students with medical appointments and where appropriate when being referred to hospital or for a hospital admission. Failure to follow reasonable instructions from your manager or the night duty manager may result in more formal action.

## 2. Dress and appearance

2.1 A person's dress and appearance must be appropriate to their role and therefore staff may need to dress differently at work to how they would in their personal life.

2.2 This means that staff should wear clothing, jewellery and footwear which:

- Promotes a professional appearance
- Is appropriate to the tasks they may be or will be completing
- Is safe according to the tasks that may be performed
- Cannot be interpreted as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Is absent from any contentious slogans
- Is culturally sensitive

2.3 If working indoors, staff should remove their outdoor clothing (e.g., coat, hat etc.) to provide a homely environment.



### **3. Conduct outside of work**

3.1 All staff must be aware that actions in their personal lives may impact on their work and must not engage in any conduct outside of work that could damage the reputation of the organisation or the staff member's own reputation or the reputation of other members of staff.

3.2 Criminal offences must be declared and will be assessed in line with our policies on suitability to be employed at St Piers and Young Epilepsy.

3.3 The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 set out grounds whereby a staff member would be disqualified from providing early or later years childcare, if they meet certain criteria (e.g., committed a relevant offence). Staff must speak to HR if they meet these criteria.

### **4. Confidentiality**

4.1 Staff have access to confidential information about students, which may be highly sensitive or private and must always be handled, treated and stored appropriately and discreetly in line with Information Governance policies and procedures.

4.2 Staff must speak to a manager if they are in any doubt about what information can be shared with whom.

4.3 Staff must never use student information to their own advantage and information about a student must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a student.

4.4 Staff have a statutory obligation to share any concerns about a student's wellbeing or safety to the Safeguarding Team and staff must pass this information on without delay in accordance with our Safeguarding Procedures.

### **5. Social media**

5.1 Staff should not establish or seek contact with students inside or outside of work.

5.2 Staff should not be Facebook friends or communicate on any social networking sites with students or parents of current students. The only exception to this is via the organisation's main social networking accounts.

5.3 The only acceptable method of contact with students and parents/carers is via a St Piers and Young Epilepsy email account or phone and all communication should be for clear professional reasons.

5.4 Staff should speak to their manager if they have been approached by a student to communicate with them via social media and staff must also alert the Safeguarding Team if they are concerned about any personal contact between themselves or staff, students or parents.

5.5 Staff who are involved in any disciplinary or safeguarding investigation must not communicate with colleagues via any means including social networking, about the investigation they are involved with.

5.6 Staff must never post anything on social media that may compromise their professionalism or professional reputation.



5.7 Staff must also not endorse inappropriate comments/memes on social media by 'liking' them as they may also risk compromising their professional reputation and undermine the values and ethos of the organisation as a result.

## 6. Use of technology

6.1 Staff must only use a St Piers and Young Epilepsy device when taking any photo or video of a student and consent must be in place and recorded.

6.2 Staff must be able to professionally justify any photos or videos taken of students.

6.3 Staff must take caution with saving and distributing photos, and photos of students must only be emailed from a Young Epilepsy email account and with a clear explanation for why the photos are being distributed, and this must remain within the remit of the consent given.

6.4 Staff must not take any photos or videos of students, which could be seen as indecent or inappropriate.

6.5 Staff must not use any St Piers and Young Epilepsy device to look at or distribute harmful, illegal or inappropriate content.

6.6 Staff should make sure that students are never exposed to indecent, inappropriate or illegal images or content either on or offline.

6.7 Staff must never use student devices for their own purposes and/or use their own log in on a student device.

6.8 Staff must never take pictures of injuries of students unless requested to do so by the Lead DSL/Deputy DSL and only if requested to by external safeguarding teams and with consent of the student or if a best interest decision has been made. There is an exception in place for therapists who must adhere to the guidance in place, however, the students' dignity, wishes or privacy should NEVER be compromised.

## 7. Mobile Devices

7.1 Personal Mobile phones and other electronic devices (including internet enabled watches, tablets, glasses etc.) must not be used for any personal reason (other than emergencies) whilst working with students and this includes during transitions across the campus.

7.2 Staff can use their personal and/or work phone for work purposes when with students. However, staff must have due regard for professional boundaries and ensure that the use of a phone/device does not interfere with the care of students.

7.3 All staff must turn their personal phones and other mobile devices off or put on to silent when in the school/college/houses/assessment centre/medical centre.

7.4 Staff must never have their mobile phone or any internet enabled device on their possession when they are supporting a student with any personal or intimate care. This includes smart phones, smart watches and smart glasses.



7.5 If they have a personal emergency where they need to respond to their personal mobile device whilst working with students, they must seek explicit permission of a manager.

7.6 Staff's personal use of personal mobile phones and other internet enabled devices is strictly limited to break times away from students unless a phone needs to be used in an emergency.

7.7 Staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones or internet enabled devices for contacting students or those connected with the family of the student.

7.8 Staff should never give their personal mobile phone number to students or parents.

7.9 Staff should never store parents' or students' telephone or contact details on their mobile phone.

## **8. Contact, physical support and behaviour support**

8.1 Staff must never develop sexual relations with any student.

8.2 Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued. Therefore, staff must never touch students in a manner which is or may be considered sexual, threatening, gratuitous or intimidating, or in a manner which may be misinterpreted by the student.

8.3 Staff must never push, hit, kick, punch, pinch, slap, throw missiles with the intention to hurt or smack a student or threaten to do so.

8.4 Staff must not indulge in 'horseplay' with students.

8.5 Staff must not intentionally embarrass or humiliate students, for example, by using gestures, sarcasm or humour in an inappropriate way.

8.6 Staff must not punish students or use sanctions. This is not an accepted positive behaviour support approach.

8.7 Staff must be sensitive to cultural and religious views about touching students.

8.8 Staff should self-report any action that they think could be misinterpreted by others, or which may have intentionally or unintentionally caused harm to a student, to the Safeguarding Team.

8.9 It is recognised that some students may seek physical contact and warmth and so staff must always act in accordance with a student's guidance and support plan and ensure that their own behaviour maintains professional boundaries.

8.10 Staff must never kiss students.

8.11 Staff must be aware of any guidance or risk assessments for a particular student and ensure they follow these.

8.12 Staff should always communicate with a student and let them know if the staff member needs to touch them.

8.13 Staff must follow the Personal and Intimate Care Guidelines and ensure that all personal and intimate care provided to children and adults, respects their dignity, privacy and welfare and that this care is always recorded.

8.14 Staff must always encourage students to complete self-care tasks as independently as possible.



**Report to your appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately:**

- **Any** behaviour, action or inaction by staff or situation which may give rise to complaint, misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- **Any** difficulties that you are experiencing, for example, coping with a challenging student or situation; situations where you anticipate that you may not be sufficiently qualified, trained or experienced to deal with or handle appropriately.
- **Any** behaviours of another person working at St Piers and Young Epilepsy which give you cause for concern or breach of this code of conduct or other policies and procedures.



## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

EVERY staff member has a duty to raise concerns which relate to the wellbeing and safety of students. This is not a choice but a mandatory requirement. Failing to raise concerns, or failing to intervene to prevent harm, is not only recognised as professional abuse and puts staff at risk, but also leaves children and young people at risk of further harm.

Safeguarding concerns include any staff practice or behaviour which suggests that a student is not being treated with the dignity and respect that is expected when working at St Piers/Young Epilepsy, and any practice which goes against the Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice, which all staff are expected to have signed and to follow.

Please remember if something does not look, sound or feel right, then do the right thing, take immediate action and then report your concerns as soon you possible.

We know that it can sometimes be difficult to have the confidence to intervene and raise a concern, but regardless of the difficulty, this cannot be a reason for not doing so. If you do not feel confident speaking directly to the Safeguarding Team, you can speak to someone throughout the line management chain including up to the Chief Executive Officer or you can also use the procedure as outlined in the Whistleblowing and Confidential Disclosures Procedure (found on the policy and procedures library on the intranet) to raise your concern anonymously.

All concerns are taken very seriously when it comes to protecting children and young people from harm, so that we are sure that our students are safe and well. We know that most of the children and young people we work with find it difficult to tell us if there is something worrying or upsetting them, so they rely on us to be their eyes, ears and voices.

We know that the majority of staff understand the importance of intervening to prevent harm, as well as reporting immediately when there is something worrying them, and for this we thank you.

If you have any concerns, no matter how small or trivial you think they are, please make sure you have raised these either to the Safeguarding Team, or Senior Leadership/Executive or via the whistleblowing procedure.

Remember, you can find out who to speak to from the Safeguarding Team by looking at the Safeguarding page on the intranet, looking at one of the posters displayed across campus or if in doubt contact Gill Walters; 07825 188820; [gwalters@stpiers.org.uk](mailto:gwalters@stpiers.org.uk)





### Signing Sheet

I have read and agree to follow the Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice.

I am aware of the requirements to report safeguarding concerns and will also take prompt advice from a DSL if I am unsure if thresholds for reporting have been met.

- I have discussed this guidance with a manager and I understand the contents and the responsibilities and accountability contained within.
- I understand how to report a safeguarding concern and will do so as per the Safeguarding Procedure.
- I can access my MyConcern® account
- I know who the DSL/s are/is in my service and how to contact them.
- I know where to access safeguarding information on the Safeguarding section of the intranet.

Name (Please Print) .....

Signed.....

Date.....

**A copy of this fully completed document must be kept in your supervision record and you may also wish to retain a copy for reference purposes.**

**The sign off sheet must be scanned to Human Resources; this will be retained in your personnel file.**



## Version table

Date of creation:

Approved by: Rosemarie Pardington

Version no.	Date of changes	Reasons for change	Changes made by
1	August 2023	Annual review  Combine reporting safeguarding concerns document  Update sign off sheet	Gill Walters